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LECTURES

EXPLANATORY OF

THE DIATESSARON,

OR

THE HISTORY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR

JESUS CHRIST,

COLLECTED FROM THE FOUR GOSPELS,

IN THE FORM OF A CONTINUOUS NARRATIVE.

BY

JOHN DAVID MACBRIDE, D.C.L.

PRINCIPAL OF MAGDALENE HALL.

Sint castæ deliciæ meæ Scripturæ tuæ; nec fallar in eis, nec fallam ex eis.

Augustini Confess. xi. 3.

The Fifth Edition.

VOL. I.

OXFORD,

J. H. AND J. PARKER;

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PREFACE.

When LORD GRENVILLE, as Chancellor of the University, was pleased to nominate me Principal of Magdalene Hall, I considered it my duty to do what I could for the instruction, especially in Divinity, of the Undergraduates whom this appointment would bring under my superintendence. Accordingly, I read with them for many years the New Testament; and the substance of my Lectures on the Gospels, originally printed solely for their use, has long been before the world. In committing this Work once more to the press, I avail myself of the occasion to observe, that while it continues essentially the same, it has been revised, and with the more care, because I cannot expect to publish another Edition. It only remains for me to offer my thanks for the favourable reception of the Volume, which I mainly ascribe to the illustrations I have borrowed, and the remarks I have incorporated, from Authors who have enjoyed a deeper insight into the meaning of the sacred text than myself; and to express my hope, that the Almighty Inspirer of the Infallible Word will graciously bless this humble endeavour to explain and recommend that important portion of it, which contains the only record of the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our blessed and adorable Redeemer and Lord.

Oxford, Dec. 21, 1853.

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at Claremont

TO THE
REVEREND WILLIAM JACOBSON, M.A.

PUBLIC ORATOR OF THE UNIVERSITY,
VICE-PRINCIPAL OF MAGDALENE HALL, AND THE QUEEN'S
PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY.

DEAR JACOBSON,

“Lectures explanatory of the Diatessaron” can be dedicated to no person with so much propriety as to a Professor of Divinity; and I gladly avail myself of the opportunity which the publication of this Work affords me, of connecting my name with yours, and of expressing my obligations to you as a Friend, and as the diligent and able Instructor, for many years, in Theology as well as in Classical Literature, of the Undergraduates of Magdalene Hall. It hath now pleased the All-wise Disposer of events unexpectedly to sever our connection, by calling you to a larger and more conspicuous field of usefulness, the communicating Religious Knowledge to all who are trained in Oxford to be the future Clergy of England. I am thankful that the nature of your office requires your residence within the University, and therefore, though the Academic tie that united

us be broken, there can be no impediment in the way of continuing our friendship. Looking back to the Divines who have preceded you in this Chair, I dwell for a moment on the still honoured names of Prideaux and Conant, because they were Rectors of one of the Colleges of which you have been a dependent Member; and of Sanderson, the great ornament of the other, whose works are to issue from our Press under your superintendence. The Sermons of this eminent Casuist will, from his profound and well-weighed observations, repay a careful perusal; while his Professorial publications, as well as his predecessor's "Lectiones" and "Orationes" on the creation of Doctors at the Act, give us some notion of the Divinity Exercises of their day. All of these, which, with the exception of those required by Statute from Candidates for the Bachelor's Degree, have been abrogated, had long before their abolition ceased to excite any interest; and the Professor has been more usefully employed, though the office be less dignified, since he undertook to direct Students to the best sources of information, than when he authoritatively determined controverted questions. Oxford is deeply indebted to the lamented Bishop Lloyd, for adding to his Public Course of instruction, Lectures to a more select audience on the New Testament, and the History of the Church. His plans were carried on, as long as his life was spared, by our excellent mutual Friend Dr. Burton; and

these more private Lectures have been continued for a much longer period of time by your immediate Predecessor, whose teaching has been highly approved by many, and censured, I believe, by none. Their plans, or any other schemes for diffusing sound and scriptural Religious Knowledge which may recommend themselves to your judgment, I am confident you will pursue with zeal and discretion. When our reformed University substituted, as the subjects of the Lectures of Bachelors in Divinity, the Epistles of St. Paul for the Sentences of Peter Lombard, and assumed for her arms the Bible opened at the twenty-seventh Psalm, the *Lord is my Light*, she declared with our Church, that the Word of God was her sole Rule of Faith. Henceforward it will be your privilege to make that Word your chief study, and to bring all your stores of secular learning to illustrate the unsearchable riches of Christ contained in that heavenly treasury. It wants but one year of three centuries since Peter Martyr was placed in Oxford by Cranmer to explain and vindicate and complete the Reformation then partially effected. According to his friend Jewel, he is a man never to be mentioned without the highest respect and honour; and he is praised as an Author by the candid Roman Catholic Dupin. Placed, as you now are, by God's Providence in the same Divinity Chair, at a period when the blessed Truths then revived have been lowered by some,

and even denied by others, who continued Teachers in our Church, you require the *spirit of power and of love*, and *of a sound mind*, to fulfil the duties of your office.

It is my hope and earnest prayer, that you will be enabled so *rightly to divide the word of Truth*, that all who attend your Lectures may receive the love of it; and that those of them who shall be ordained to be “faithful dispensers of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments,” may take “their doctrine and exhortation out of the Holy Scriptures,” neither seeking through the traditions of men *to be wise above what is written*, nor with the Neologian to accommodate it to their own prepossessions; but so to handle it, as to save both themselves, and those that shall be committed to their care.

With a sincere wish for your usefulness, and consequently your happiness, I subscribe myself,

Your sincere and affectionate Friend,

JOHN DAVID MACBRIDE.

Oxford, Lent Term,
1848.

PREFACE

TO THE EDITIONS OF 1835 AND 1838.

THESE Lectures being designed for Students, who have neither leisure nor opportunity to consult many Commentaries, the Author has selected from some of them, and from other works, such observations as he conceives will facilitate their understanding the Diatessaron, that is, a continuous narrative of our Saviour's life in the words of the four Evangelists. He has not scrupled to adopt the remarks of others, and, when it suited his purpose, their expressions; and he feels it to be his duty to make this acknowledgment of his obligations. Scott's Commentary, which embodies much of what is valuable in Hammond, Whitby, and other standard expositors, and Mac-knight's Harmony, may be regarded as the basis of these Lectures; and the Compiler is greatly indebted to Dr. Hales's New Analysis of Chronology, and to Blomfield's Critical Digest, from both of which he has derived much information which he might not otherwise have obtained. Other works, both ancient and modern, have been examined, but they are generally expressly cited. The remarks, it will be observed, are more frequently explanatory than devotional; but the Compiler trusts, that he shall not therefore be supposed to undervalue the latter; for he firmly believes, that the Holy Scriptures were not written, like the compositions of uninspired men,

to gratify curiosity by the communication of knowledge, but to make the reader *wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*; and he is persuaded, that they have been justly characterised by the Apostle Paul, as *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*. Still he has considered, that the text must be accurately understood before it can be judiciously applied; and he has introduced no moral and spiritual improvements of it which would have enlarged the volume, without increasing in proportion its value, since he does not aspire to equal in excellence, or usefulness, those contained in the many edifying works in which our language happily abounds. He would refer the Student, who seeks through their assistance to be *built up in our most holy faith*, to works which have been long familiar to the devout believer, and which will not disappoint him; to Bishop Hall's *Contemplations*, Matthew Henry's *Bible*, and Doddridge's *Family Expositor*; and he would add, that a valuable accession has been made lately to this department of Christian literature, by the present Bishop of Chester^a, in his *Exposition of the Gospels*, and by the Rev. Charles Girdlestone, in his *Commentary on the New Testament*, which are intended, and particularly adapted, for family worship.

^a I have the gratification of stating, (though probably few who will read this work require such information,) that the Prelate designated in the text as Bishop of Chester, is now Archbishop of Canterbury, and Primate of all England, 1838.

Oxford, July 27, 1835.

PREFACE

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

THESE "LECTURES" being out of print, I have been induced to publish a new Edition, in the hope that it may prove useful to persons who have neither the means to purchase, nor leisure to study, the Expositions of our numerous approved Commentators. The Work, which is considerably enlarged, has been carefully revised. Indeed scarcely a page remains unaltered; but the variations from the last Edition are mostly verbal, and the additional remarks are chiefly introduced for the purpose of rendering more clear to the Reader some of our Lord's Discourses, which I thought might otherwise appear obscure to those who had not at the time the sacred Text before them. In doctrine no alteration will be found; for increasing study of God's Word has only confirmed the conviction I had happily long previously entertained, that our Reformers had had *the eyes of their understanding enlightened*, to comprehend that Record of unerring Truth, and to extract out of it, and embody in the "Articles" which they drew up "for the establishing Consent touching true Religion," not only those grand verities concerning

the Deity, of which there has been no doubt in the Church since the fourth General Council, but also those respecting the fall of Man, and his restoration from sin and misery to holiness and happiness, which have been contested between Romanists and Protestants. These doctrines of Grace, as they have been emphatically called, so odious to the carnal mind, had been not only neutralised, but actually perverted, by Tradition; till it pleased God, after centuries of religious darkness, to raise up in Germany in an Augustinian Monk an intrepid Preacher of "Justification by Faith only," and of all the blessed consequences of that "most wholesome doctrine so very full of comfort." The *Sun of Righteousness* soon arose *with healing in his wings* upon England, and Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, with a few faithful associates, purified from Romish superstition, and guarded from sectarian innovation, our branch of the Catholic Church, which they soon after consecrated and consolidated by martyrdom. The discussion of controverted points is foreign to the design of this Work; but as our opponents *wrest* passages in the Gospels, as they do in other parts of Holy Scripture, from their obvious meaning to support pernicious errors; such as the merit of good works; works of Supererogation; Transubstantiation; the Sacrifice of the Mass for the benefit of the living and the dead; the worship of Saints; the exaltation of the Virgin Mother of our Lord to be Queen of Heaven, and the Bishop of Rome's right to govern as a *Lord the heritage*; I have felt myself bound to argue occasionally against Roman Catholic interpretations; but I have

never brought against them *a railing accusation*, or ascribed to them tenets not sanctioned in the Decrees of their own Councils, or in the Creed of Pope Pius.

Illustrations of customs, or a statement of the precise meaning of important words, have been sometimes introduced, not to draw off the mind to points of minute criticism, but in order to ascertain the meaning of the Text, that fully developed, it might, under God's grace, enlighten the understanding and renovate the heart. To use the expressive words of a justly-valued Friend^a, under whose judicious and candid Exegesis, Holy Scripture will prove, I trust, *a lantern to the feet, and a light unto the paths*, of a succession of numerous hearers of his Lectures, I have endeavoured "to keep ever in mind the relative importance of the several subjects of consideration, and to observe the great leading objects of Revelation apart from the distorting views of controversy;" and so I hope I have avoided "the danger of losing the Theologian in the Antiquary, or possibly the Christian in the Theologian." The essential Truths of Christianity, as collected out of the Bible, and arranged in Propositions in Catechisms and Bodies of Divinity, command our assent; yet as propositions they are too apt to remain cold and lifeless dogmas, which make little impression upon the heart. We have consequently abundant reason to thank God that his *diversified wisdom* has recorded them for our acceptance, in *divers manners*, especially as incentives to gratitude

^a Inaugural Lecture by the Provost of Oriel, Dean Ireland's Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture, p. 26.

and motives to actions; and illustrated them by the practice of his Saints, and, above all, by that of *his dear Son*. The Bible, consisting as it does in so large a proportion of the history of nations and individuals, is "Philosophy," or rather Religion, "teaching by example;" and the portion of it which it is the object of these LECTURES to explain, brings preeminently before us Him who *is the Way, the Truth, and the Life*; and not only is he exhibited to us abstractedly as an object of Faith, but he is delineated, for our instruction, as a Man "like unto us in all things, sin only except." If a heathen Philosopher, enamoured of Wisdom, could exclaim, that in a visible form she must excite marvellous love; surely when Virtue, at once more sublime and more tender than Plato or Aristotle or Zeno could even conceive, descended upon our earth in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, it ought to have been irresistibly attractive. It is our privilege to have this image preserved in the Gospels; and we are invited to deduce practical lessons of piety, holiness, and morality, from this only perfect human Being. We reflect with delight upon the memory of patriots who have died for their country, even though that country be not our own; and still more highly do we appreciate the philanthropic few, whose ardour to do good has not been restricted within narrower limits than those of the world; but in this survey we follow step by step the Babe of Bethlehem from the cradle to the tomb, and even beyond the tomb to the mount of Olives; and learn to admire, venerate, and love this best Friend of the whole human race; who, knowing beforehand the

decreed termination of his life of privation and self-denial, nevertheless, "for us men and for our salvation, came down from Heaven." Dwelling *from the beginning, before ever the earth was*, in unapproachable light with *the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords, his delight was with the sons of men*; and consequently he condescended to partake of *flesh and blood*, so that he was *not ashamed*, even after his glorious Resurrection, *to call them brethren*. Gratitude for unmerited salvation draws us by the *bonds of love* to this our incarnate God, who *loved us, and washed us from sins in his own blood*. *The heavens must receive our Benefactor in time and in eternity, until the time of the restitution of all things*; but though as yet we *see him not*, even now feeling our unutterable obligations to him, we *rejoice in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory*.

Freed from *the spirit of bondage, and crying, Abba Father*, the Christian finds that his Master's yoke is, as he promised, *easy, and his burden light*; and having his *heart set at liberty* by the Holy Spirit, looking off from the great cloud of witnesses and companions of his *race, to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of the Faith*, he will run with cheerful alacrity in the *ways of God's commandments*, that *he may finish his course with joy*. *Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength*, was, we know from the highest authority, *the first and great commandment* under the Mosaic Dispensation; and this supreme affection the same Jehovah, when *manifested in the flesh*, required from all his disciples. At the same time he preserves them from the

anxious perplexity into which they might be thrown, by the attempt to ascertain the strength or sincerity of their feelings, by supplying them with an invariable and certain standard by which to test their affection. *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;* and for the comfort and reward of these, he hath been graciously pleased to add, *and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

Oxford, Lent Term, 1848.

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INTRODUCTORY DISSERTATION.

WHEN we consider in how many respects our own times differ from the age in which our incarnate Lord was pleased to *dwell among us, full of grace and truth*, and moreover that we read his discourses and the record of his ministry in a translation, it will not surprise us that an unlearned reader finds difficulties in the Gospels. To him, from ignorance of ancient manners, and of geography or history, many passages are obscure, which learning renders perspicuous. Some are perplexing; a few wholly unintelligible. Happily these are generally of subordinate importance; for the moral precepts and leading doctrines are repeated in such a variety of terms, that a pious and well-disposed examiner will rarely overlook or mistake them. Such difficulties ought not to shake his faith, but to stimulate his diligence; and for his encouragement to persevere, I can assure him, that the mist that hangs over the prospect will gradually disperse, and the sun will shine forth and illuminate his path. The country, however, which he has to traverse is extensive and diversified, and both time will be saved, and wandering from the right road prevented, by accepting as a guide one who has already taken the journey. There are also critical observations on language, and notices of places and persons, which will be arranged with more advantage in a continuous form, than

scattered over the sections of the work. I therefore propose to consider briefly, in an Introductory Dissertation,

I. the number, origin, authors, and qualities of the Gospels :

II. Harmonies of the Gospel narrative :

III. the genuineness, credibility, and inspiration of the New Testament :

IV. the original Text :

V. the Language :

VI. the Ancient Versions and the English Translations :

VII. the Geography of the Holy Land :

VIII. the Mosaic Ritual, and the typical character of the Law and of Scripture History :

IX. the Predictions of the Saviour, from the Fall to the close of ancient Prophecy :

X. and the political state of the world at the Birth of our Saviour.

I say briefly, because these subjects have been discussed by writers of sagacity and erudition, and by many of them at great length; and therefore my purpose will be better answered by condensing the results of their investigations, than by an elaborate examination of their arguments and authorities, which may hereafter be studied in their own works to more advantage.

SECTION I.

The number, origin, authors, and qualities of the Gospels.

St. Paul, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, (iii. 6, 14.) contrasting the Christian with the Mosaic dispensation, calls it the new *Diatheké*; and the term which ought to have been rendered *Covenant*, has been transferred from the covenant itself, to the writings in which it is contained. Origen^a,

^a Commentary on St. John, and in *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν*, iv. 1.

who wrote early in the third century, is, as far as we know, the first who uses it in this sense; but the Apostle's language, and especially the phrase, *reading the old Covenant*, so naturally lead to it, that it was probably employed as soon as it was found convenient to distinguish the Christian from the Jewish Scriptures. In the Latin version, *Diatheké* was translated not *Fædus* but *Testamentum*^b, and consequently the volume of the Christian Scriptures has been always entitled throughout the Western Church, except by a few modern critics, the *New Testament*. This is to be regretted, though custom has reconciled us to it, since it confuses our conception by the introduction of a new idea, which I conceive was never intended. *New Testament* reminds us of the Old, and we at once perceive that it is wholly inapplicable to the Mosaic covenant, in which no contracting party died; and though the Christian may be called a testament, since its benefits are procured through the death of Christ, yet the term is objectionable, because it draws off the mind from the doctrine on which our Saviour designed to fix it, when, instituting the Eucharist, he said, *This is my blood of the new Covenant*, speaking of himself not as of a man confirming a will, but as of a victim ratifying a covenant by sacrifice. His words suggest a comparison of the covenant made through Moses with the Israelites, with the better one of which he is himself the Mediator, established for *the many*, that is, all mankind, upon better promises, that, as is argued in the epistle to the Hebrews, (ix. 15.) *by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions which were under the first covenant, they which were called might receive the promise*

^b *Testamentum* in popular, though not in classical language, was equivalent to *fædus*, as appears from the Italic version, in which among other instances the covenant made with Noah is rendered *Testamentum*; so that the idea introduced into our version, might not have been intended by the author of the Vulgate.

(not of the earthly Canaan, but) *of an eternal inheritance*. In the epistle to the Hebrews, the preciousness of the Redeemer's blood is contrasted with the worthlessness of that of bulls and goats, which can only sanctify to *the purifying of the flesh*, and required to be annually repeated, while he, by *one sacrifice of himself once offered, has perfected for ever them that are sanctified*. Throughout the comparison, a covenant is no doubt the principal object; yet most commentators suppose that the Apostle, availing himself of the ambiguity of the word, adds the idea of a will, when he continues, *where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator, for a testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth*. At first reading, the statement seems to be true, but it depends entirely upon this passage; and as it can be translated more in conformity with the context, I am satisfied that upon a full consideration, the reader will agree with me, that Faber^c has proved that throughout *Diatheké* is used only in the sense of covenant, and that this limitation of the Apostle's reasoning renders it more perspicuous. The same view had been taken before by Whitby, Doddridge, and Macknight.

The New Testament consists of twenty-seven independent works, by eight authors, arranged in three parts, Historical,

▪ In his interesting work on the three Dispensations, (vol. ii. p. 330.) "*For where there is a covenant, there also it is necessary that there should be the death of the ratifier, for a covenant over dead victims is valid, since it is of no strength while the ratifier is living*." (Heb. ix. 16, 17.) A version substantially the same is given by Wakefield and Scholefield. The whole argument is much obscured in our authorized version by the arbitrary interchange of the two words, for the one of the original and the Vulgate. Having first used Covenant, our translators introduce Testament, and again return to Covenant. The reader ignorant of Greek would hardly imagine that *Mediator of the new covenant*, (xii. 24.) and *Mediator of the new testament*, (ix. 15.) are renderings of the same original.

Doctrinal, and Prophetic. The first exhibits the history of our Lord and Saviour, and of the rise and early progress of his Church. The second contains Epistles of five of his Apostles to different branches of that Church, to individuals, and to believers in general. And the third, a Prophecy revealed to his beloved and last surviving Apostle, which under mysterious figures represents the sufferings and persecutions of his people, and affords, even to those least able to penetrate their meaning, the assurance of the final triumph and universal prevalence of his religion. Our present enquiry, with the exception of a few remarks upon the text and version of the volume, is limited to the first four books, to which the significant title of *Gospel* has been long restricted.

The Apostle, says Theodoret, in his commentary on the epistle to the Romans, calls his preaching Εὐαγγέλιον, *Evangelium*, that is, a Good Message, because it announces the reconciliation of God to man, the overthrow of Satan, the remission of sins, the abolition of death, the resurrection of the dead, eternal life, and the kingdom of heaven; and certainly the term is applied with peculiar propriety to the happiest intelligence that ever reached, or can reach, the fallen posterity of Adam. We have substituted for it an equivalent Anglo-Saxon compound, *Gospel*, that is, good word, though it may be also rendered God's word, as God is so called, because preeminently good. Like Covenant, it was transferred in time from the good news itself, to those portions of the sacred volume which more especially contained it, that is, to the narratives of the ministry, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, who was not merely, like the Apostles, sent to proclaim the blessing of redemption, but was the author of it; and the writers of them received in time the title of Evangelists, which originally meant the preachers of the gospel. This secondary sense does not occur in the Scriptures; and

modern critics are agreed that there is no reason to think, that when St. Paul mentions the brother whose praise is in the gospel, (2 Cor. viii. 18.) he refers, as was formerly supposed^d, to the written gospel of St. Luke.

The number of these narratives are four; and they have been uniformly attributed, by the uninterrupted tradition of the Church, to Matthew and John, Apostles, and to Mark and Luke, the companions of the Apostles Peter and Paul. These four, and these only, we learn from Eusebius, and other ecclesiastical writers, have been universally acknowledged. We know from St. Luke's preface, that before he wrote, many had *taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of the things which are most surely believed* among Christians; on which Origen observes, that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, being full of the Holy Ghost, did not take in hand to write, but wrote gospels, intimating, that the word he uses ἐπεχείρησαν conveys censure. This I cannot think the Evangelist intended, for he refers to no mistakes or inaccuracies; and the expression, *It seemed good to me also*, appears to put them on the same level with himself. If he had said some instead of many, I should have concluded that he meant only Matthew and Mark, (as indeed Dr. Hales supposes,) for he describes them as eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word. If he referred to other gospels, they must have perished, for we have reason to think that the spurious ones now extant were forgeries of a later age, and if they had been written before his, he could not have failed to condemn them. As, however, they are numerous, and passed under the name of Apostles or their associates, modern infidels

^d In this, and several other passages, translators, by retaining what has become a technical term, obscure the meaning. The substitution of *the good news of peace*, Eph. vi. 15. *of salvation*, i. 13. and *of the grace of God*, Acts xx. 24. for *gospel of peace*, &c. would render them more perspicuous.

have insidiously availed themselves of them, for the purpose of undermining the credit of the genuine ones; and a suspicion may accordingly be excited in the minds of those who know them only by name, that their rejection, and the admission of the Four into the C  non of Scripture, was an arbitrary selection. A few, in whole or in part, have come down to us; but the most cursory inspection of any will satisfy a candid person, that it would be absurd to consider such as the rule of Faith; and the remark may be extended to the spurious Acts, Epistles, and Revelations. It would indeed be strange, if there had been any to advocate their pretensions to authority among the early Christians, except such as hoped to shelter under the names of our Lord's immediate followers their own peculiar notions, for they abound in frivolous and absurd details, and useless and even objectionable miracles; they support the sanctity of relics, an extravagant and unjustifiable reverence for the Virgin Mary, and other doctrines which originated in a subsequent age; they contain studied imitations of passages in the genuine Scriptures; their statements are occasionally at variance with the known character and principles of their reputed authors^e; and they sometimes mention events later than their assumed date, and contradict authentic history. They apparently originated in the desire of accrediting erroneous opinions, and gratifying an idle curiosity, which wishes to know more of our Lord's private life than it has pleased the Holy Spirit to reveal. They carry with them their own confutation; and are opposed

^e The few apocryphal works extant have been published, with notices of those that have perished, by Fabricius, in his *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti*, and most of them have been translated by Jones, in his "New and full Method of settling the canonical Authority of the New Testament," with references to the Fathers by whom they were first mentioned.

by external evidence, for they are denounced by the fathers as heretical, and some, as Irenæus, (iii. 1.) argue in favour of the authenticity of those which we receive, that there could not be more than four, from several fanciful analogies, as of the number of elements, of the points of the wind, and of the living beings seen by Ezekiel and St. John. The last allusion is remarkable, as having caused the dedication, as it were, to the Evangelists of the man, lion, bull, and eagle, which seem to be symbols devised to represent, as obedient to Jehovah, all his creatures, arranged for that purpose under the original division of wild and tame quadrupeds and birds. Such comparisons will have no weight in the present age as *arguments*; but they are valuable as evidence to the *fact* of the whole Church under heaven having received only four Gospels without dispute, as we are assured by Origen, and by the still more important testimony of Irenæus, which, as coming from one who derived his information from Polycarp the disciple of St. John, ought to be held decisive. We may therefore dismiss the consideration of the apocryphal gospels, with the remark, that they undesignedly serve the cause of Christianity; for not only do their puerilities and absurdities, as contrasted with the contents of the Four, satisfy us of the genuineness of the latter, which would have resembled them in their defects, if like them they had been forgeries, but they also confirm the truth of the authentic Scriptures, being written in the name of apostles or their companions, and assert like them the divinity of our Lord, and his power both of working miracles, and of conferring that power upon others. Their accounts too do not contradict the canonical gospels; they are only unauthorized additions; for the same principal facts are stated, and the leading agents are the same. It follows therefore, that at the time of their composition the history of our Lord was too well known to be materially altered, and

that the orthodox faith was already firmly established. Such works as far as they were received promoted superstition, but they can render no service to infidelity. They were not designed to supersede the Four, only to enlarge their number: yet so unskilful is the imitation, that their contents must betray to a pious reader, however unlearned, their human origin, as the miracles which they ascribe to the holy child Jesus, for they are confined to his youth, and unconnected with his ministry, are at best capricious tricks, and too often acts of a revolting character. It is well observed in a recent able work, that, with a very few partial exceptions, the apocryphal gospels are a barren and dreary waste of wonders without object or aim, and only instructive as making us feel strongly, (more strongly than but for these examples we might have done,) how needful it is that in working a miracle, power should be accompanied by wisdom and love, without which power can excite only hatred and terror^f.

There is also a general consent of antiquity to the order in which the Gospels were written, for with the single exception of a passage quoted by Eusebius (vi. 13.) from a lost work of Clement of Alexandria, it is either affirmed or implied by all the fathers. I shall be content with citing the memorable passage from Irenæus, (iii. 1.) the earliest in which all the four are mentioned. "Now Matthew among the Hebrews published a written gospel in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching and founding the church of Rome. After their departure, (*exodus*, meaning probably out of life,) Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also delivered to us in writing his gospel; and Luke, the follower of Paul, recorded in a book what had been preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who had leaned upon his bosom, residing at Ephesus, set forth a gospel." This

^f Trench's Notes on the Miracles, p. 42.

order we may view as confirmed by their present arrangement, the only deviation from which is in the Mss. of the Italic version, and in one Greek Ms. (Codex Bezae) which is accompanied by that version. It is evidently meant to be chronological, for otherwise we may presume that precedence would have been given to that of the beloved disciple over those of Mark and Luke, and we know that his is the last in point of time. Luke's preface has been cited to show that his was the first canonical gospel; but it proves no more at most, than that those of Matthew and Mark were not known to him. Even if he were acquainted with them, we have no right to infer that he would have mentioned them, for the supplemental character of St. John's gospel is universally allowed; yet he does not name those of his predecessors, which we cannot doubt he had read. Consequently no argument can be brought against Luke's knowledge of the former two from his silence. Griesbach is thought by some critics to have proved from internal evidence; that, contrary to the general notion, Luke wrote before Mark; but the only ancient authority to which he can appeal in support of his conjecture is Clement of Alexandria. Such reasoning, however, is very fallacious, for Mill maintains the opposite opinion, which Townson and Greswell have substantiated by the examination of their respective texts to the satisfaction of others. The relative dates of the gospels of Matthew and John are generally allowed, and Hug seems to me to prove the priority of Mark to Luke. The gospel of the latter is, he says, distinguished by several events unnoticed by Matthew, in only two of which doth Mark coincide. Now supposing Luke to have been the earlier writer, it seems incredible that Mark should take his incidents almost exclusively from Matthew.

The order then in which the Evangelists wrote may be regarded as settled; but the dates and places of their pub-

lication have always been subjects of discussion, and we do not now possess materials for deciding those questions. We may however venture to affirm, that the first three were composed before the destruction of Jerusalem. We may easily believe with Eusebius, that while the Apostles were preaching to persons acquainted with the leading facts of their Lord's history, they would not think of committing them to writing; but that when they were to separate they would draw up such an account as a substitute for their oral instruction; nor is it an improbable conjecture, that Matthew undertook the office with the approbation of the rest. Some fix as early a period for his writing as eight years after the Ascension, while others date it as late as thirty, about the time generally assigned to those of Mark and Luke. After an examination of the reasoning of Lardner, Jones, and Townson, who have discussed the question, I am disposed to think, that we may assume as a fact, that Matthew wrote early in Judæa, for the use of the original converts; that Mark's gospel was revised, if not dictated, by Peter, for a mixed society of Jewish and Gentile converts in Italy; that Luke published his in Achaia, with a peculiar view to the establishment in the faith of Gentile converts, and especially of one of high rank; and that long after, John, the last surviving Apostle, the only person who could then do it with authority, at the request of the bishops of the lesser Asia, added his, both to supply their omissions, and to counteract the Gnostic heresy concerning the nature of the Saviour. Critics allow that he had read the three others, and designed his own as a supplement, saying that there was only wanting an account of what Christ had done in the early part of his ministry. "He observed," says Clement of Alexandria, "that the things concerning the humanity of Christ had been related by them, and being persuaded by his friends, and also moved by the Spirit of God, he wrote a spiritual gospel."

In the judgment of this inspired author, a sufficient account of what Jesus had taught and done and suffered, had been written to satisfy the reader that *he was the Christ the Son of God, and that believers might have life through his name*; and this judgment is the best answer to the question, why the Church receives neither more nor fewer gospels than four. He is at the same time careful to remark, that Jesus wrought many more miracles than are recorded, and that we have only a small selection of his actions. It was important to keep the narratives within a moderate compass: and we cannot doubt, that the overruling Spirit of God influenced all the Evangelists to select such facts and discourses, as were best adapted for the conviction and edification of their readers in every age. It may appear extraordinary, that instead of having one complete narrative of our Lord's ministry, we are left to collect it for ourselves out of four; but as he, while on earth, revealed the scheme of salvation by degrees, so there was no doubt a fitness in the progressive development of his history in writing; and certainly the attention it requires to compare the particulars in which the Evangelists agree or differ has a tendency to impress them more strongly on the memory. "How then," asks Chrysostom, in his commentary on Matthew, "was not one Evangelist sufficient? No doubt one might have sufficed; but as there are four such authors, who did not write at the same time, nor in the same place, who did not act in concert, and nevertheless speak as it were out of one mouth, the proof of their credibility is stronger. It is objected, that many passages convict them of dissimilarity. Our answer is, that if their agreement had been perfect, their opponents could never have been persuaded that they had not written in concert. Now the apparent contradiction in minor matters frees them from such a suspicion." If their narratives had no variations, they would have been equivalent to no more than one; but now our belief is con-

firmed by the testimony of four independent witnesses; for though we should allow with the German critics, that the first three had access to some common documents, which form the basis of their works, or with some ancient and many modern writers, that each succeeding Evangelist derived much matter from those preceding him; still even in the gospels of Matthew and Mark, which most closely resemble each other, there is a sufficient variation in the addition or omission of particulars, to show that neither was a servile copyist, who did not exercise his own judgment.

It is satisfactory to observe, in how great a degree the gospels authenticate themselves. Taking from ancient and credible authors the fact, that they were written by the Evangelists, we shall find them answer so completely to the idea of what we might respectively expect from them, that we cannot doubt that we have them as they were originally published. In Matthew's, we find marks that he wrote in Judæa and for Jews; in the others, that they wrote chiefly for Gentile converts, in countries in which the Jews and their customs were but imperfectly known. Three bear tokens of being written or approved by Apostles; but in that of Luke we distinguish the character of one, who, though fully acquainted with his subject, was not an eye-witness, or an Apostle; for he treats their failings with more tenderness than they themselves do, and calls them by this name of pre-eminence, which they themselves never assume; and when he makes mention of Christ as from himself, he substitutes the title of Lord, which Matthew never uses, John seldom, and Mark only once.

No attentive reader can fail to be struck with the great similarity of the first three gospels; for he finds, that, with some variation of minute particulars, they generally relate the same events, and report the same speeches; and this is the more surprising, when we recall to mind the strong ex-

pression of St. John, that if all that Jesus did was recorded, *the world itself could not contain the books that should be written*. At first sight we might expect more variety, and though the course of events must have been in all the same, each might, without enlarging his work, have given us different miracles and different discourses. We must consider, on the other hand, that the repetition of the same with variations, renders them more credible. Their method is therefore really the best. We must also consider, that their object is an exhibition of our Lord's ministry, not his biography. Two therefore of the Evangelists begin with his baptism, and the other two, though they give an account of his birth, pass on as soon as they can to his public life, so that the whole intervening period, with the exception of his visit to the Temple, is a blank; they only informing us that he was subject to Joseph and Mary, and that *he grew in favour with God and man*.

This similarity is the more remarkable, because it is not only in matter but in words; and when we examine the original, we find, sometimes in two and sometimes in all three, again and again, a perfect identity. It is still, I believe, the common opinion, and has been supported by divines of eminence, ancient and modern, that three writers, recording in the same language the same events, might fall repeatedly into the same expressions, without any knowledge of each other's work. So thought Le Clerc and Lardner; and even after Bishop Marsh's elaborate investigation of this phænomenon, and most ingenious attempt to solve it, Bishop Randolph observes, that, "with respect to our Lord's discourses, it should be recollected, that the sacred historians are anxious to report with accuracy; and that in such a case even ordinary historians would endeavour to preserve the same words. In seeking to do this, it is not to be wondered at, that two or three writers should often fall upon verbal agreement; nor, on the contrary, if they

write independently, that they should often miss of it; because their memory would sometimes fail them. It is natural to suppose the Evangelists studious of this very circumstance; and we have also reason to think, that they had assistance from above; and yet it is not necessary to suppose, that either their natural faculty, or the extraordinary assistance vouchsafed them, or both, should have brought them to a perfect identity throughout; because it was not necessary for the purposes of Providence, and because it would have affected their character of original independent witnesses. Let me add, that these discourses, before they were committed to writing, must have been often repeated amongst the Apostles in teaching others, and in calling them to remembrance among themselves. Matthew had probably often heard and known how his fellow-labourers recollected the same discourses which he had selected for his own preaching and writing; and we know not how much intercourse they had with each other, but probably much, before they finally dispersed themselves. Mark and Luke, though not eye-witnesses, would have in a degree the same opportunities. I admit then of a common document, but that document was no other than the preaching of our blessed Lord himself. In looking up to him, the Author of their faith and mission, and to the very words in which he was wont to dictate to them, (which not only yet sounded in their ears, but were also recalled by the aid of his Holy Spirit, promised for that very purpose,) they have given us three gospels, often agreeing in words, (though not without much diversification,) and always in sense." The Bishop has forgotten, that though our Saviour's discourses are *recorded* in greek, they were *spoken* in another language, and this greatly weakens his argument. But without dwelling upon this oversight, I am convinced, that his hypothesis will not be held tenable by any one, who will make the experiment suggested by

Bishop Marsh, of translating a page from any language, and of comparing his own version with those of others. The differences will satisfy him, that three texts so closely allied, could not have been formed independently of each other; and the difficulty would be still greater in an original composition. The argument is strengthened, if we find these three authors not only making choice of the same ordinary words, but employing such as are unusual, and which do not occur in other parts of their own writings. Two and sometimes three use the same expressions for several verses together, then differ, and again return to the same.

Now there appears to be only two modes of explaining this extraordinary coincidence of words and phrases. One, that the Evangelists copied from one another, which appears to have been first suggested by Augustine; the other, the invention of modern German theologians, that each was unacquainted with the gospels of the other two, but compiled his own from some earlier notes, which had been taken, of the acts and discourses of our Lord. This idea, which had occurred to Le Clerc, lay dormant upwards of sixty years, when it was revived by Eichhorn, but it excited little attention in our country, till the publication of Marsh's dissertation on the Origin of the first three Gospels, appended to his translation of Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament.

Eichhorn, by an ingenious analysis, has investigated the contents of this supposed document, both in its original state, and with the various additions made to it in the copies which he assumes to have been used by the different Evangelists. His narrative is divided into forty-two sections, containing the facts common to all. Throughout these, Mark and Luke have precisely the same order; but Matthew, though he agrees with them from the nineteenth section, that is, from the feeding the five thousand to the

end, differs in the former part. This document (as will appear to any one who will pick it out of any one of the three, by omitting the additional and peculiar matter) contains a short yet well-connected narrative of leading transactions; and such as might be expected in a first sketch of our Saviour's ministry. It is very remarkable that Lardner observed, in his history of the Evangelists, that if all the sections common to the three were separated from the other matter in their Gospels, they would contain a history of Christ. He then enumerates the particulars, and concludes with saying, "Here are all the integrals of a gospel;" though the thought, that these integrals might have existed by themselves in a separate work, did not strike him. The scheme of Eichhorn has been improved by Bishop Marsh with great ingenuity, but it is so complicated, that a simple statement would hardly render it intelligible.

His hypothesis has been controverted by the late Bishops Randolph, Middleton, and Gleig; and it may be observed in general, that granting him that we have no fault to find with any particular step in his process of reasoning, yet the discovery, without any historical authority, from an analysis of their contents alone, of *ten* different sources to these gospels, two in hebrew, and the rest in greek, some known to all of them, and others only to two or one, is in the highest degree improbable, and that the total silence of ecclesiastical antiquity is a strong presumption against their existence. Mr. Veysie endeavours to explain this verbal resemblance by a *plurality* of common documents; but this scheme, if less complicated, being substantially the same, is open to the same principal objections. The ingenuity shown in its support is attractive, yet I am convinced that the true hypothesis is the simple one, that as Mark had read Matthew's gospel, Luke had studied those of both. It equally solves the difficulties; it is more simple and

more natural, and it has the advantage over that of a common document, of explaining (what that altogether overlooks) the supplemental arrangement of facts. This arrangement has been examined by Greswell, who observes, "that it would be a moral impossibility that Mark, compiling an independent gospel from any document, though the same might have been used by Matthew, should be found in the choice and collocation of his facts to be thus entirely accommodated to him; or that Luke doing the same should be thus critically accommodated to either, as the use of common materials could account for no instance of agreement which was not absolute and entire." The discrepancies in these gospels are thought unfavourable to the hypothesis, that the authors were acquainted with the works of one another, but I think the objection is overrated by the advocates for a common document. However, for the discussion of these difficulties, I must refer to Townson, Greswell, and Hug, the force of whose remarks would suffer from any attempt to abridge them. Lardner rejects this explanation, because he thinks, as indeed will most who have not given the subject full consideration, that the Evangelists, transcribing from one another, without giving any hint of so doing, diminishes the value of their testimony; but the real question is, what solution can be offered of a difficulty that must be allowed to exist? and unless a third be offered, we have only to choose between these two. Our unwillingness to admit certain consequences can never justify our rejection of an opinion, against which we have nothing of more weight to urge. It may even happen, that upon more mature consideration, this very unwillingness may appear unreasonable; and I think it has been shown to be so in this instance, by Townson and Greswell. I observe from the latter^g, that St. John's having seen the gospels of his predecessors, has never been objected to his

^g Vol. i. p. 62.

credibility in those passages in which he goes along with them; and I would enquire of those who feel any alarm on that score, whether, if they knew that St. Mark had repeatedly heard and conversed with St. Matthew, they would think him on that account less competent to write a gospel, and what difference there would be between hearing and conversing with him, and reading his work? We should consider also that St. Matthew's Gospel, if prior to those of Mark and Luke, must have been already familiar to Christians. How then can we suppose those Evangelists ignorant of it? and if invited themselves to write, why should they studiously deprive themselves of the advantage of consulting it? What could so effectually teach them when to enlarge and when to compress, as the perusal of his narrative? and St. Luke's preface seems to show, that he had read those to which he there refers. It is moreover to be remembered, that they are not mere transcribers; there are verbal differences as well as a verbal agreement; and also, while the facts related are substantially the same, some new beauty, force, or propriety is introduced by additional circumstances, which show that each had independent sources of information.

This hypothesis, instead of supposed compilations by unknown disciples, of whose character we know nothing, offers us, in fact, in the inspired gospel of Matthew, the best common document which was made use of by Mark and Luke; and whoever will study with this view any Harmony, must, I think, satisfy himself, that as Mark improved Matthew's narrative, so did Luke that of both. Neither, however, wished to supersede the work of his predecessor, and therefore, instead of altering it, left each a gospel of his own, thus at the same time authenticating what was already received, and imparting additional information. Suppose Peter, desirous of leaving his testimony with the Church to the authenticity of Matthew's

gospel: he might have mentioned it with respect, and classed it with the Scriptures, as he does St. Paul's epistles; but if a question should arise, not whether Matthew had composed a true gospel, but which it was, such testimony could no more decide it, than the former could the authenticity of the epistle to the Hebrews. If then a gospel was afterwards to appear under the title of the gospel according to the Hebrews, which might be mistaken (and afterwards was mistaken by some) for that of Matthew, how could Peter deposit with the Church a better touchstone, by which to detect its falsity, than by incorporating so much of the genuine one into his own? that is, into Mark's, which may be considered as his. Again, if Luke transcribed several passages from Matthew and Mark, we have the attestation to the truth of both, not only of himself, but also of his companion St. Paul. If we rightly esteem the quotation of a few sentences of Matthew's gospel in the early Fathers an argument for its authenticity, the many portions of it transferred into the two other gospels, which are not only earlier, but inspired compositions, carry with them much higher authority, and their own credit is not diminished in consequence; because by enlarging on his account, as they frequently do in relating the same event, they show that they might have written theirs, if they had thought fit, without reading his. Thus this theory confirms, instead of weakening, as Lardner feared it might, the authority of the testimony of the Evangelists, because, to use Greswell's words, "the evidence of four competent witnesses, all converging upon the same point, is better than the evidence of any one by himself; and if, besides what each supplies in particular, St. Mark recognises St. Matthew, St. Luke both, and St. John all the three, we are put in possession of a cumulative amount of testimony, so much the stronger and more indissoluble, because it is cumulative and not single."

I proceed to examine each gospel separately, and begin with that of Matthew, a Galilean, and a publican, who collected the customs at Capernaum. While employed in his profession, Jesus invited him to become his disciple; and *he arose, and followed him*. Mark and Luke, in the parallel passages, call him Levi; Matthew, therefore, was probably a name which he assumed according to the custom of Jews, who had much intercourse with Gentiles. Of his history, after the day of Pentecost, and of the time and nature of his death, we have no authentic account. When he has occasion to speak of himself, he does it with humility: he passes over the feast he made for our Lord, and the fact that he left all to follow him; and when he enumerates the twelve Apostles, he places himself after Thomas, contrary to the order of Mark and Luke. As one of that chosen band of confidential followers, he needed no prototype, either in Hebrew or Greek, but was an original author, and none could be better qualified; for after his call, he constantly attended upon his Master, and was an eye-witness of every event which he records, except the transfiguration, and the agony in the garden, which, as he himself tells us, he gives on the authority of the more favoured three.

We have the strongest internal evidence of the tradition that he wrote for his countrymen, for whatever has a tendency to conciliate them is brought forward, and nothing introduced that might obstruct their reception of it. He begins, therefore, with a genealogy; and those passages in the prophets which foretel the birth of the Messiah, or describe his ministry, are carefully noticed, because the fulfilment of prophecy was the most convincing argument to them. As his object was not a circumstantial biography, he writes apparently in the order not of events, but of topics: and his work has been compared in this respect to the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon.

Matthew is distinguished for the clearness with which

he records discourses; of this, his numerous parables, and especially the sermon on the mount, are examples. His narrative of our Saviour's infancy records facts not noticed by the other Evangelists, and he has other peculiar matter; as, John's reluctance to baptize Jesus; the observation, that Galilee was to be the chief theatre of his miracles, in fulfilment of Isaiah's prediction; his first circuit of Galilee; the cures of the two blind and one dumb man; Peter's walking on the lake; the miraculous payment of the tribute money; the parables of the labourers in the vineyard; of the two sons; of the ten virgins; and of the talents; and the description of the general judgment; the account of Judas's death; Pilate's washing his hands; his wife's dream; the dead rising out of their graves after the Resurrection; and the placing the guard at the tomb. It is difficult to assign a probable date to this gospel, as we have to choose between two; the earliest, A.D. 41, eight years after the Ascension; the latest, A.D. 61, when St. Paul first visited Rome. The passage quoted above from Irenæus, is favourable to the later one; which better suits the remarks, that *Acel dama is so called unto this day*, and that the Jews then believed the report spread concerning the Saviour's body. On the other hand, it does not seem likely that the Apostles should separate before it was written.

The language too in which this gospel was written has been a subject of discussion. The ancients unanimously declare that it was hebrew; and Erasmus is the first who argued against their testimony. He has been followed principally by Protestant critics, and Campbell supposes their judgment to have been biassed by party feelings. The Council of Trent having decided to prefer the Vulgate, the then received latin translation, the Protestants, who appealed to the original text as the standard, were aware, that the Romanists would retort, that in the instance of Matthew's gospel, they must depart from their own principles; and he

concludes, that to silence this objection, they maintained that this Evangelist wrote in greek. Modern critics reconcile the two opinions by the supposition, that Matthew wrote his gospel in both languages, the consent of antiquity pleading strongly for a hebrew original, and the internal evidence for a greek. This determination of the discussion is not unreasonable, for it may be supported by the example of the historian Josephus. According to Eusebius, Matthew, when about to leave his country, wrote a hebrew gospel; and we can easily conceive that he might translate it at a subsequent period, for the benefit of Gentile converts. This supposition would reconcile the discordant opinions concerning its date, as the hebrew might have been written at the earliest period, the translation at the latest. The disappearance of the original is explained by its being so interpolated and corrupted by the Ebionites, as to lose its authority, as well as by the increasing disuse of the language after the destruction of Jerusalem.

Mark is supposed to have been converted by Peter, for he calls him his son^h, and we know that the appellation is applied in this sense by St. Paul to Timothyⁱ. We read in the Acts^j of Mark the son of Mary, who is generally believed to be the Evangelist; and if this opinion be correct, he was the nephew of Barnabas^k, and the frequent fellow-labourer of Paul. It was at her house that the believers were engaged in prayer for Peter when cast into prison; and to it he came on his miraculous liberation. Her son's name was John; and he probably assumed the Roman one of Mark, when he accompanied Paul and Barnabas upon their first mission to the Gentiles. Having left them abruptly in Pamphylia, Paul on the next occasion declined his services; whereupon he went with his uncle to Cyprus, in which the latter had had an estate^l. Afterwards

^h 1 Pet. v. 13.

ⁱ 1 Tim. i. 2.

^j Acts xii. 12.

^k Col. iv. 10.

^l Acts xv. 37. iv. 36, 37.

Paul was fully reconciled to him, and during his last imprisonment desires Timothy^m to bring him, bearing to him the honourable testimony, *he is profitable to me for the ministry*. He had been with him before at Rome; for he sent his salutation in his epistles from that city to Philemon, and the Colossiansⁿ. He is said to have founded the church of Alexandria, and to have died there in the eighth year of the reign of Nero. In his account of our Lord's apprehension, he introduces the fact of a young man, *νεανίσκος*, who followed him when deserted by his disciples, but afterwards himself fled, leaving his linen wrapper in the hands of the soldiers, *νεανίσκοι*, who attempted to seize him. Townson supposes him to have been the Evangelist himself; and this supposition would explain the introduction of the incident, which is apparently irrelevant; and, if it could be verified, might make him, in part, an original witness; but this is not material, since his gospel may be considered as that of Peter; and as the plural number was in popular language used of soldiers, it seems natural to give the noun the same sense in the singular, which would be most unfavourable to this conjecture.

Papias, our earliest authority, A.D. 110, informs us, that Mark, being Peter's interpreter, wrote whatever he remembered, but not in the order of time; because he was not himself a follower of our Lord. This reason was not valid; and the assertion is in my opinion untrue. Jerome tells us, that, being requested by the brethren at Rome, he wrote a short gospel, according to what he had heard related by Peter, who approved it, and delivered it to be read in the church; but this is inconsistent with the passage of Irenæus cited already, if we take the exodus or departure of Peter to mean his death, as it does in his own second epistle^o. Chrysostom says it was written in Egypt; but the general consent of antiquity, including Egyptian

^m 2 Tim. iv. 11.

ⁿ iv. 10.

^o 2 Pet. i. 15.

writers, decides in favour of Rome; and it has been remarked in corroboration of this opinion, that mentioning Simon the Cyrenian, (xv. 21.) he adds, that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, a fact, which would be interesting only where they were known; and the name of the latter occurs among those whom Paul salutes in his epistle. Internal evidence confirms the tradition, that Mark wrote under the direction of Peter; for scarcely any action or conversation is mentioned by him, at which that Apostle was not present; his faults and his denial are brought into full view, while whatever redounds to his credit is slightly touched, or omitted. Less is said of his speedy repentance and bitter tears, than by Matthew and Luke; the benedictions and promises to him are left out; and it has an introduction of only fifteen verses before it comes to his call.

The hebraisms of the style, which is the least classical of any of the inspired authors, show him to have been a Jew; and his latinisms, that he had lived among Romans. Baronius even maintains that he wrote in latin, and that the greek is a translation; but this opinion derives no support from history; and its advocates forget that the Roman Christians were principally Jews, and consequently more conversant with greek than latin, and that the former was understood by most educated persons of Gentile extraction. If Paul addressed a letter to them in the former language, it was not likely that Mark would write a gospel for their use in the latter. The work itself shows that it was written out of Judæa, and for the use of Gentiles; for terms intelligible only to Jews it either avoids or explains^o.

^o Thus instead of *Mammon*, he uses the common word "*riches*;" to *Jordan*, he adds "*river*;" and to *defiled*, or *common hands*, "*unwashen*," (vii. 2.) To *Corban*, (vii. 11.) he subjoins the interpretation, "*that is, a gift*."

From the striking coincidence of Mark's gospel with that of Matthew, Augustine calls him his epitomizer; but this supposition, contradictory, as we have seen, to the most ancient testimony, though supported by some eminent moderns, is untenable. Conciseness is his characteristic, and he narrates facts more circumstantially than Matthew, while he abridges discourses. He deviates too from him no less than thirteen times in his arrangement of facts, and has both additions and omissions which it would be difficult to account for on this theory. A mere abridger would also have avoided every appearance of contradiction; but Mark calls Matthew, Levi; speaks (x. 46.) of one blind man, where he mentions two, (Matt. xx. 30.); and makes Peter twice interrogated by the same maid, (xiv. 69.) instead of once by two, (Matt. xxvi. 71.) According to Matthew, Christ crossed the lake the day after the sermon on the mount; but according to Mark, he then retired to a desert. (Matt. viii. 28—35. Mark i. 35.) His gospel is, in fact, a critical revision of Matthew's; and as he had paid most attention to the discourses, his own is more full as to facts; and where his predecessor is most concise he is most copious, and differs enough to be an original authority. He adds many circumstances we may presume from the personal knowledge of Peter, and a minute examination of his gospel will show differences in the matter, which he has in common with Matthew and Luke. His verbal resemblance to the former is greatest, but his order of events generally agrees with that of the latter. As specimens of his additions we may enumerate the circumstance, that during the temptation Christ was with wild beasts; the surname given to the sons of Zebedee; our Lord's anger and grief at the obduracy of the Jews; and the declaration of his unbelieving friends, *He is beside himself*.

The parable of the imperceptible growth of corn is peculiar to him, as well as the miraculous cure of a deaf

and dumb man, (vii. 32.) and of a blind one, (viii. 22.) both wrought, not instantaneously, but gradually, and by the use of means, though such as had no intrinsic efficacy. His concluding words show, that he did not write his gospel till after the Apostles had dispersed themselves among the Gentiles, and we may probably date it between A. D. 60 and 63.

Luke is generally supposed to be the person called by Paul *the beloved physician*; (Col. iv. 14.) and suitably to this profession, when he has occasion to speak of diseases, his language is more appropriate than that of the other Evangelists^p. According to Eusebius, he was a native of Antioch. We learn from himself, that he was not an eye-witness of our Saviour's actions; and he seems to have been descended from Gentile parents, a proselyte first to Judaism, and afterwards to Christianity. This conjecture, for it is no more, is founded upon the observation in the Acts, (xxi. 27.) that the Asiatic Jews stirred up the people, because they supposed that Paul had introduced Gentiles into the temple; and Trophimus is mentioned, but not Luke, though (xxi. 15, 17.) then with the Apostle. Hence we infer that he was reckoned among the Jews as a proselyte; and in the epistle to the Colossians, (iv. 11, 14.) he is classed with those of Gentile descent; for the Apostle, after sending the salutation of those of the circumcision, names Demas and Luke. We conclude that he joined the Apostle at Troas, (Acts xvii.) because he then begins to use the first person plural, and from its change for the third that he remained at Philippi, when Paul proceeded to Thessalonica. (xvii.) He was with him again on his next

^p Thus instead of *παρὰλυτικός* employed by Matthew and Mark, but unknown to the ancient Greek writers, he uses the classical term *παρὰλελυμένος*; and for the *διεσώθησαν* of the first and the *ἐσώζοντο* of the second, *saved*, he has *iāto*, *healed*. Freind's History of Physic, vol. i. p. 224.

visit to Troas, supposed by some on that account to have been his home, and he continued with him till the conclusion of his narrative. Of the rest of his history we know no more than that danger could not separate him from his friend; for Paul writes to Timothy, when deserted by Demas and others, *only Luke is with me*. Some maintain that his gospel was written in Achaia, others at Rome, and from the abrupt termination of the Acts, which is avowedly the second part of it, they assign them both to the years in which he dwelt there in his own hired lodging. The date may be assumed to be a year or two after that of Mark. *The Scripture saith, the labourer is worthy of his reward*, writes St. Paul, in his first epistle to Timothy, (v. 18.) I find the sentiment only in this Gospel, and conclude therefore that we may infer that it was then extant, and that he cites it as an inspired work.

He is said to have designed his gospel for Gentile converts, and therefore he explains the Jewish customs, which he mentions. He traces the real lineage of the Messiah from his virgin mother up to Adam, to show that he was the seed of the woman, who was promised for the redemption of the world; and he marks the æra of his birth, and of the Baptist's announcing the Gospel, by the reign of the Roman emperors. He likewise inserts examples of kindness shown to Gentiles, and introduces events and parables to encourage them to embrace Christianity. His knowledge of Jewish usages shows him to be a Jew, while the superiority of his style, which bears a considerable resemblance to that of his companion Paul, confirms the conjecture of his Gentile descent. Many of his expressions are to be found in the best classical authors; and Campbell observes, in proof of his copiousness, that his list of peculiar words is greater than that of all the other Evangelists, and that many of them are compound ones.

He is also a greater master of composition, of which his first period is an eminent example. He approaches nearer the manner of profane historians, in giving his opinion; while the other Evangelists abstain altogether from praise or censure, as indeed he himself does far more than uninspired authors⁹. He supplies interesting particulars omitted by his predecessors; as, the birth of the Baptist; a second narrative of Christ's infancy; the miraculous draught of fishes; the restoration to life of the widow's son; the pardon of the penitent thief, and the journey to Emmaus of the two disciples. He has a long section (ix. 51. xviii. 14.) peculiar to himself, containing the particulars of Christ's last journey to Jerusalem, full of the most interesting matter, commencing with the mission of the seventy, and ending with the conversion of Zacchæus. In this valuable portion we have the parables of the Samaritan; the persevering friend; the rich fool; the great supper; the prodigal son; the unjust steward; the rich man and Lazarus; the barren fig-tree; the importunate widow; the Pharisee and the Publican; the cure of the woman bowed together with infirmity after eighteen years; and the man suffering from dropsy. He is generally considered to have made a classification of events; but he informs Theophilus, that he meant to write in order; and as he does this in the Acts, we conclude that he is equally methodical in what is the first part of the same work. Luke takes Matthew as his guide for our Lord's speeches, but follows Mark in the arrangement of events. We have not now the means of ascertaining how he obtained his

⁹ For example, he says, that *the people were filled with madness*; (vi. 11.) and that the Pharisees were *lovers of money*; (xvi. 14.) and while Matthew and Mark apply to Judas the neutral term, *he delivered up*, παραδούς, he in one place (Luke vi 16.) stigmatises him as *a traitor*, προδότης.

peculiar information; but we know that he had opportunities of collecting it while the companion of Paul in Palestine, if not earlier; and we may be satisfied that he would submit his gospel to his perusal. As guaranteed by an inspired Apostle, we accept it as of equal authority with that of Mark, though Paul was not, like Peter, an eye-witness of our Lord's ministry.

John was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and had an elder brother, James, also an Apostle, whom Herod Agrippa beheaded; (Acts xii.) and both were surnamed by their Master, *Boanerges*, or *sons of thunder*, because they would preach the word with power. He is reported by Theophylact to have been a relation of our Saviour; and this tradition, if true, would render his mother's request in behalf of her sons less extravagant, and give an additional reason for leaving the Virgin to his care. We read of his mother as one of the women in attendance upon Jesus; and as there is no mention of their father after their call, he probably did not long survive it. Though a fisherman, he appears to have been in good circumstances, being owner of a vessel, and having hired servants, (Mark i. 27.) It is not probable, therefore, that his sons were altogether illiterate; and the terms ἀγχαμμάτοι and ἰδιῶται, rendered in our version, *unlearned* and *ignorant*, (Acts iv. 13.) do not necessarily mean more than persons in private life, who had not been brought up in the schools, and were therefore not learned in the traditions. His circumstantial account (i. 37—41.) of the two disciples of the Baptist, who followed the Saviour to his lodging, one of whom he tells us was Andrew, makes it probable that he was himself the other. We find him with Jesus when he wrought his first miracle; and he was afterwards called to a regular attendance on him, together with Peter and Andrew, while he was with his father mending their nets. His age at this period cannot be ascertained, but it is supposed that he was the youngest of the twelve,

and that his youth alone prevented his obtaining among them the preeminence in rank which was therefore assigned to Peter. Three times we hear him reproved by his Master; once, when a spark of ambition inflamed him and his brother with the desire of preeminence above his colleagues; again, when indignant at their Lord's rejection by the Samaritans; and once more, when his indiscreet zeal forbade one who was casting out devils in the name of Christ, because he followed not them. He was so eminently the object of our Lord's regard and confidence, that he characterises himself as *the disciple whom Jesus loved*, (xiii. 23.) and therefore we find him present at scenes to which no others than his brother and Peter were admitted; that is, at the resurrection of Jāirus's daughter; at his Master's only earthly glorification on the mount; and at his deepest humiliation, the agony in the garden. At the last supper he sat next to Jesus, and was the only disciple who ventured to ask which was the traitor. Though like the rest he *forsook him and fled*, he is thought to have been the disciple known to the high priest, (xviii. 15.) who followed him to the palace; and it is certain that he stood near his dying Lord, when he consigned his mother to his care. After the day of Pentecost, he and Peter take the lead as Apostles; and we have St. Paul's testimony, (Gal. ii.) that fourteen years after his first visit to Jerusalem, they were then both there, and looked upon as pillars of the Church. He retired from Judæa probably after the Virgin Mary's death, on the commencement of hostilities. His recollection of his Master's warning and prediction would induce him to depart; and he withdrew to Asia Minor, where he presided over seven cities, living chiefly at Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province. The time of his settling there is unknown, but it was probably after the martyrdom of Paul; at least there is no salutation or allusion to him in the epistles of that Apostle, though he wrote to two of the cities under John's superintendence,

and to Timothy, whom he had sent to put in order the church at Ephesus. John had no doubt his full share of suffering, intimated in the assurance that he should drink of the same cup as his Master; but he was not required, like Peter and his brother, to suffer death for his sake. He was, however, as he calls himself, (Rev. i. 9.) *a companion in tribulation* with the christians of Asia, and was banished to Patmos, one of the islands assigned for the confinement of convicts. Here Jesus, with whom he had familiarly lived as a man, appeared to him in the majesty of Jehovah, and favoured him with a view of the Church triumphant in heaven, and a mysterious representation of its future history throughout its militant state on earth, which he commanded him to record. When the persecution ceased, he was permitted to return to Ephesus, where he is said to have lived to his hundredth year; and as his life had been so long protracted, it was rumoured among the brethren that he was never to die.

His gospel is reported to have been his latest work; and critics observe in corroboration of this report, that it is written in better greek than the Apocalypse. Still, says Campbell, it is very full of hebraisms; but he adds, "the language is no more than the case: let not its homeliness discourage any one from examining its invaluable contents; for the treasure itself is heavenly, committed to earthly vessels, that to the conviction of the sober-minded the excellence of the power might appear to be not of man, but of God. While his gospel bears more signal marks than the others of being the work of a Jew, the whole strain of it shows that it must have been published at a time and in a country where Jewish manners were unknown, because they are explained to the reader. There is little force in the argument that it was written before the fall of Jerusalem, because he writes that there *is* there a pool; as that might remain, though the surrounding porticos were destroyed, as

it does still if the real site be shown; and there appears to be no reason to doubt the truth of the tradition that fixes it to A.D. 98, more than thirty years after the latest date assigned to any of the earlier three. He omits the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, probably because it had been fulfilled; he writes concerning Peter's death as a past event; and his naming him as the disciple who cut off the ear of Malchus, when a knowledge of the fact could not injure him, is a presumption in favour of a late date. It is evident that John has little matter in common with the other Evangelists. The only miracle he repeats is the feeding of the five thousand; and this is done as introductory to Christ's remarkable discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum, to which it led. The supper at Bethany, Christ's anointing by Mary, and his entry into Jerusalem, had been related by the other Evangelists; but he mentions the indignation of Judas at the waste of the ointment, and adds the important circumstance, that Lazarus, whose resurrection they had passed over, sat at table, and by thus publicly bearing witness to this amazing miracle, contributed greatly to the momentary popularity of his Master, and to the determination of the Pharisees to seize him, contrary to their original design, during the feast. He passes over the Lord's Supper, as sufficiently reported, but adds the washing of the Apostles' feet, and the Saviour's farewell consolatory discourse, and his intercessory prayer. He brings a most important accession of information, which no other then alive could have supplied; yet he did not write to supersede the earlier gospels, for his own narrative would in parts be obscure to readers not acquainted with them. From several examples of this given by Michaelis it will be sufficient to observe, that he has not recorded our Saviour's declaration before Caiaphas, which caused his condemnation for blasphemy, though he mentions his being sent to him; nor does he refer to the account of the false witnesses,

though (iii. 20.) he had prepared his readers to expect it. It appears then that ancient writers are correct in maintaining, that he had read the first three gospels, and wrote his own not to supersede them, but to supply their omissions. Accordingly, he chiefly treats of occurrences preceding the commencement of them, or which happened at Jerusalem; for the others almost wholly confine their narratives to Galilee, and begin with the imprisonment of the Baptist. Thus he records the call of some disciples of the Baptist, and the first miracle at Cana, of which he was an eye-witness, and informs us that our Saviour cleared the temple at the opening of his ministry, as we learn from the others that he did at its close.

If we may trust Irenæus, this last survivor of the Apostles had also another object in the publication of a gospel in his old age; writing it not only to complete the picture of his Master's ministry, but also to preserve his people from the "*vain philosophy*" of the Gnostics, against which in its infancy St. Paul had deemed it expedient to warn his Asiatic converts. Lampé, Lardner, Tittman, and other moderns of note, not finding in this gospel the formal confutation of that heresy which they expected, discredit the statement; yet Irenæus's full acquaintance with all the varieties of Gnosticism, and his intimacy with John's own disciple Polycarp, render it improbable that he could be mistaken; while we have it on the word of the author himself, that he wrote that his readers might believe that Jesus was both the Christ, and the Son of God. (xx. 31.) His contemporary Cerinthus denied as well the proper humanity, as the divinity, of the Messiah; asserting that Jesus was the son of Joseph as well as of Mary; and no candid person, I think, can rise from a perusal of this gospel, without a conviction that it vindicates both. It is true that these subjects are not controversially treated; but it appears to me, the highest commendation we can bestow

upon a work is to say, that it instructs the unlearned in the truth, without suggesting the existence of the opposite error. This commendation is preeminently due to St. John ; for the terms which he applies in his introduction to our Lord, will be allowed by all believers to be most happily chosen to denote his essential and mediatorial glory ; while only those of his own age, or those who study ecclesiastical antiquity, know that they are the technical terms of the Gnostics, which he has transferred from their imaginary emanations of the Deity, to him of whom alone they can be predicated with truth. The Logos of the Gnostics was one of these emanations, inferior in dignity to many ; he therefore opens his gospel with the declaration, that it had existed from all eternity, and was not only with God, but was God. Life, Grace, Truth, and Only-Begotten, are the names of other emanations ; and they are applied by him to the Logos, to show that they are not independent beings, but titles descriptive of him. He also takes care to affirm, in opposition to their notions, that the Logos was the Creator of all things ; and instead of only being united for a season with Jesus, or having only an apparent body, was actually *made man*.

As it is requisite for a full understanding of this gospel, and of some passages in the epistles, to have a general notion of Gnosticism, I will here introduce from the Bampton Lectures of that learned and judicious divine, Dr. Burton, our justly-lamented Regius Professor of Divinity, an abridged view of that fanciful system. It originated with Simon Magus, and was completed by Valentinus, who came to Rome in the former part of the second century ; and we owe our knowledge of it mainly to the opponents of the latter. This *gnosis*, or knowledge as it was proudly called, was no distinct philosophy, but an attempt to combine into one system the Platonic doctrine of ideas, the mysterious cabbala of the Jews, and the peculiar dogmas of Christianity ; and Christ

is represented as revealing it. In common with all the philosophers of antiquity, Gnostics could not conceive the possibility of a real creation, and therefore believed that the world had been brought into its present form out of pre-existent matter. That they held to be intrinsically evil, and this fancy supplies a key which opens the system; for however their sects might differ in minor points, all rejected as impious the belief, that the supreme God, who was the Father of Christ, and the Author only of good, had originated our world. Those who embraced the Persian doctrine of two independent co-eternal principles of good and evil, maintained that it had been brought into form by the latter, while others assigned its production to an inferior Emanation, who was the God of the Jews. According to this fanciful theology, the supreme Deity had dwelt from all eternity in a pleroma or fulness of inaccessible light, and one of his names was *Bythos*, to denote the unfathomable depth of his perfections. This Being, acting by an operation purely mental upon himself, originated two others of different sexes, from whom several pairs proceeded by a series of descents, more or less numerous according to different schemes, (in the earlier ones eight, in that of Valentinus no less than thirty): and these were called æons, from the periods of their existence before time, or emanations from the mode of their production. They had lived for countless ages with the supreme Being, who is called their first father, because the source from which they all proceeded, and appear to have been inferior each to the preceding, in proportion to their distance from him, and their approach to the extremity of the pleroma. Beyond, was matter inert and powerless, though coeternal with the supreme Being, and, like him, without beginning. At length, one of the æons passed the limits of the pleroma, and meeting with matter created the world, after the model of an ideal one existing in the mind of the supreme Deity. The evil thus

produced he endeavoured to overcome; and for this purpose the Gnostics borrowed largely from Christianity; but so perverted its tenets, that we cannot even allow them to be heretics in the modern acceptation of the term, but must class them with unbelievers like the Jew and the Heathen. In their system, Christ and the Holy Ghost were only æons, and even subordinate to *Monogenes*, *Logos*, and *Zoe*; that is, Only-Begotten, the Word, and Life; and yet they taught inconsistently, that Christ was the one put forth to remedy the evil which Demiurgus, the creative æon, had caused. He was to emancipate men from the tyranny of matter, or of the evil principle, and by revealing to them the true God hitherto unknown, to fit them by *gnosis*, that is, knowledge, to enter the divine pleroma. In all their notions concerning Deity, we find them struggling with the difficulty of reconciling his goodness with the existence of evil. Christ as an emanation could have no real connection with matter; yet the Christ of the Gnostics was held out to be the same with him who was revealed in the Gospel; and it was notorious that he was revealed as the son of Mary, who appeared in a human form. Two methods of extricating them from this difficulty presented themselves. They either denied that he had a real body that could be handled, affirming him to be an unsubstantial phantom; or, granting that there was a man called Jesus, the son of human parents, they believed that the æon Christ quitted the pleroma, and descended upon him at his baptism, again to leave him before his crucifixion. The former of these opinions, which seems to have occurred first, was held by the Docetæ, so called because they maintained that Jesus only *seemed* to be a man; and these were the earliest heretics; for, as Jerome expresses himself, the body of our Lord was declared to be only *apparent*, while the Apostles were still in the world, and the blood of Christ was still fresh in Judæa.

There was another sect of much less celebrity than the

Gnostics, the Sabians, or followers of the Baptist, whose errors, according to Michaelis and Rosenmüller, it was the intention of St. John to oppose; and certainly, unless there had been persons in his time who exalted too high the herald of the Saviour, the Evangelist would hardly have said that John was not the Light, but was sent to bear witness to it. It is also observable, that he connects his introduction, not, as a modern reader might expect, with the birth of the Messiah, but with his baptism by John, whose inferiority he pointedly marks out by contrast; for he is careful to record his own acknowledgments, that he must decrease, but Jesus increase; that he is only sent before him as an herald, and that Jesus cometh from above, is above all, and hath not received the Spirit by measure. It was at Ephesus where this gospel was written; that Paul baptized twelve of these Sabians; and Apollos, a distinguished member of their body, was converted to Christianity. We afterwards lose sight of them, and they continued unknown, till modern travellers discovered a few families of them at Bassora. In their Scriptures, which are written in a dialect of Syriac, the Baptist is called the Apostle of the light, and his baptism the baptism of life, and Jesus the disciple of life; yet notwithstanding he is represented as John's superior.

Some passages in this gospel have been elucidated, or rendered more emphatic, by these critical investigations; but we should be upon our guard against the pernicious conclusion to which they have a tendency to lead us, that the main scope of this, or of any other book of Holy Writ, is the confutation of temporary error. If we concede, as men of learning are sometimes too apt to do, that our Lord

⁹ They have been translated by Norberg, a learned Swede, under the title of *Codex Nasaræus liber Adami vocatus Syriace transcriptus Latineque redditus*. 4to. Lond. Gothorum, 1815.

and his Apostles had principally in view the opinions of their cotemporaries, we shall infer that their declarations concern us but indirectly, and shall comparatively neglect them. But we may rest assured, that the manifold and varied wisdom of God, looking forward to the end of time, has contrived that his word should be a lamp and a light to every succeeding generation. As to this gospel in particular, its author informs us, that, out of the innumerable signs which he might have recorded, he has made such a selection, as should convince his readers *that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they might have life through his name.* (xx. 31.) The various modifications of Gnosticism have been long extinct, and are now imperfectly known even to the learned; but this proposition has still opponents, though of a different description; and this gospel is as useful as ever, since it reveals in language as decisive against the modern rationalist, as the fanciful heretic of the primitive age, this vital doctrine of belief in the incarnate Son of God, which is the foundation of the Christian's hope, and is the only one that can purify the heart, and overcome the world.

St. John's style is plain, and less figurative than that of the other Evangelists. It is generally perspicuous; but when obscure, it is not from the incompetence of the author, but from the sublimity of the subject, to which no expressions are adequate; he "sounding forth, as it has been said, as a son of thunder, things higher than any intellect can comprehend; and by a certain peculiar majesty of speech, bringing as it were out of the clouds and enigmas of wisdom, a devout knowledge of the Son of God^r." For parables, he substitutes allegories; and these instruct us more in the doctrines than in the duties of religion. His gospel contains more of conversations than of actions; and the few miracles it records are evidently introduced for

^r Basil. Hom. 169. Epiphanius adv. Hær. 79.

the sake of the lesson he deduced from them. Our Lord's discourses, preserved by the earlier Evangelists, are of a practical tendency; those which John has selected are spiritual, and establish the Saviour's divinity, and the other essential articles of religion which he had affirmed in the Introduction. These articles are more fully expanded in the epistles; but there they are presented to us in the language of the writers; whereas John exhibits them in the words of Christ himself; so that he introduces us to a more intimate knowledge of our Redeemer, than any other author.

In the earlier gospels, Jesus teaches us as the Son of Man; in this as the Son of God, the Oracle who is in heaven, he reveals the will of his Father. It is not surprising that our divine Master should appear in a different light when speaking of heavenly and of earthly things. Still, though his teaching, as reported by John or Matthew, is so different both in substance and in manner, there is no inconsistency; and as in the gospel of the former he occasionally descends to topics of ordinary life, so in that of the latter, (xi. 25.) as when he thanks his heavenly Father for hiding from the wise and prudent the secrets which he has revealed to babes, he rises to as high an elevation of thought as in any of the discourses preserved by the beloved disciple. The difference therefore is not in the teacher, but in the subject which he treats; and this difference is confined to discourses; for, in conduct, there is none, as his character in all the gospels is precisely identical.

Each Evangelist has his peculiar manner; but simplicity is the characteristic of all, in design no less than in style. They neither explain nor command, promise nor threaten, commend nor blame; but preserve one even tenor, reporting what was said or done by the enemies and friends of their Master, without any encomium on the one, or invectives against the other. They seem unwilling to mention any of

whom they have nothing good to report. Thus among the many who were accessory to the condemnation of Jesus, we hear only of the high priest and his coadjutor, the Roman governor, the tetrarch of Galilee, and Judas. The suppression of the names of the former would have impaired the evidence of the history; and justice to the eleven required that the guilty apostle should be specified. But the names of Joseph and Nicodemus, the only members of the Sanhedrim who did not concur in the sentence of condemnation, and those of persons distinguished for faith and other excellencies, as Jäirus, Zacchæus, Lazarus, and his sisters, are preserved; while the sacred penmen make no secret of their own faults and those of their fellow disciples. Of this candour, the intemperate zeal and the ambition of the sons of Zebedee, the incredulity of Thomas, and the presumption and denial of Peter, are eminent examples. Equally certain of all that they advance, the most signal miracles and the most ordinary events are narrated in the same tone, as by faithful witnesses, whose business it was to testify and not to argue. As to their Lord, they appear to consider his character as superior to any praise which they could bestow. Panegyric is the natural language of a disciple, or even of an impartial historian, after the recital of the unjust execution of any of those excellent men, of whom the world was not worthy; and the colouring is apt to be heightened, in proportion to the degree of the sufferings, and the worthiness of the sufferer. Both Xenophon and Plato close with praise their accounts of the death of their master, the only sage that ever has been compared with Jesus; but his biographers do not presume to offer the tribute of their admiration; and instead of pointing out the wisdom and virtue of his life, they leave it to speak for itself*. Hence animation is excluded from their narratives; no angry epithet or pathetic

* Newcome on our Lord's Conduct, p. 503.

exclamation ever escapes them; no attempt is made to excite either pity or resentment. They lay before you nothing but facts, and are at no pains to make them appear interesting or credible. About the ornaments of style they show themselves to be indifferent; and their phraseology must have been regarded as awkward, because foreign; yet the more the Gentiles became acquainted with their books, the more they would discover of a charm in them, to which they found nothing similar; insomuch, that they were not ashamed to be taught by writers for whom they had previously entertained a sovereign contempt. Nor was this admiration of the sacred writings to be found only among the vulgar: it originated but it did not terminate with them; for even those in the higher classes, who would be most shocked with inelegancies and barbarisms, found in the Scriptures an irresistible attraction, which overcame all their prepossessions, and compelled them to acknowledge, that no authors could so effectually convey conviction to the understanding and reformation to the heart, as these artless biographers. This peculiarity supplies a powerful argument, both in favour of their inspiration, and of their own conviction of it. We may perhaps also be authorized to consider it as justifying our own use of unimpassioned language in the repetition of Scriptural narratives, though no terms can be strong enough adequately to express the blessings purchased for believers by the voluntary sufferings and death of the great *High Priest of our profession*, who having *by himself purged our sins, has entered into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us*; and the noblest use of eloquence must be to acknowledge our obligations to the Author of our salvation, and to celebrate his praises, who *has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light*^t.

^t The information and opinions contained in this section are derived chiefly from Jones's Method of settling the Canonical Autho-

SECTION II.

Harmonies of the Gospel narrative.

OUR Saviour's ministry having been narrated by four Evangelists, who have each not only peculiar matter, but also circumstantial variations of that which they have in common, it is natural in studying any one gospel, to compare it with the others. The variations invite, and seem to require, adjustment. We accordingly find, that within a century of the publication of the last, a digest was formed out of them by Tatian, a pupil of Justin Martyr; that afterwards, Eusebius arranged under several heads the matter common to three, or two, or peculiar to one Evangelist; and that Augustine composed a tract concerning their agreement. In modern times above a hundred and seventy Harmonies have been enumerated, and the number is the best proof of the difficulty of the undertaking. All may be reduced to two classes; one, in which it is assumed that each Evangelist has written in chronological order; the other, in which it is allowed that some have deviated from it. Osiander, one of Luther's fellow-labourers, is at the head of the first, A.D. 1537; Chemnitz, 1593, at that of the second. In the former, of which Macknight's is the best known, there can be little important variation; as, by maintaining that events recorded by two or three, with some minute difference, were not the same, they cut instead of untying the knot. Thus some of these have the healing of the servants of two centurions, the raising from the

rity of the New Testament; Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History; Townson's Discourses on the Gospels; Campbell's Preliminary Dissertations; Bishop Marsh's Translation of Michaelis; Hug's Introduction; and Greswell's Dissertations upon a Harmony of the Gospels.

dead of two damsels, the stilling miraculously two storms on the lake, with nearly the same circumstances, and with the use of the very same words. In the second class there is of course more variety, because these harmonists, though agreeing in their principle, differ in its application.

A Harmony is a much more difficult work than it appears to be to those who have not fully considered it; for not only few dates are given, but the events which Matthew relates in one order, are placed by Mark and Luke in another. Harmonists differ as to which they shall adopt; and in this diversity of opinion among eminent men, supported by ingenious arguments, many will be disposed to acquiesce in Griesbach's conclusion, that no chronological Harmony can be made to stand on a sufficiently firm foundation. His own Synopsis exhibits in parallel columns the matter common to the first three; and to reduce the number of transpositions, Mark's order is adopted, because it coincides with Luke's, while the passages peculiar to each are inserted in intermediate sections. Michaelis, disclaiming also any attempt at a chronological Harmony, has drawn up one which is very useful as an index; pointing out, like Eusebius, where the same transaction is recorded, what the Evangelists have in common, and what is peculiar to each. He follows Matthew, with whose account the narratives of the others are collated. St. John's gospel is the harmonist's difficulty; for since he has so little matter in common, each must divide it into portions, to be inserted between the sections of theirs according to his own scheme. The simplest plan is, like Calvin, to limit our Harmony to the first three. If, however, we bear in mind, that St. John had carefully perused them, and designed his own work to be supplementary, we shall not only perceive, that an Harmony without it will be incomplete, but that it alone enables us to form one that can prove satisfactory. The

first point to be settled is the duration of our Lord's ministry; and unless we avail ourselves of his gospel, we shall probably adopt the opinion of the three first centuries, that it lasted no more than a single year. This opinion is now, I believe, exploded; yet it is scarcely avoidable, if we attend exclusively to the earlier gospels, which treat only of the transactions in Galilee, and make mention of no journey to Jerusalem, except that which Jesus took to celebrate the passover, at which he suffered. Clement of Alexandria (Strom. i. p. 407.) applies to his ministry in the strictest sense Isaiah's description, *the acceptable year of the Lord*; but this is understood by Epiphanius and others who extend it, as only descriptive of the first year, in which he was generally acceptable to the nation. Eusebius, who lived in the fourth century, tells us, that he agrees with those who assign to it four passovers; and this, which has been ever since the prevalent opinion, appears to me to have been established by Greswell. Sir Isaac Newton, who is followed by Macknight, includes even five; and Mann, who is followed by Priestley, revived the ancient hypothesis of one. It is surprising that it could be entertained by any who had read the gospel of St. John, from which we learn, that between the passover at which our Lord commenced his ministry, and that on which he died, one (vi. 4.) if not two others intervened. The earlier, it is true, (ii. 13.) he only calls a feast; and upon the interpretation of it the settlement of the question depends. Referring to Newcome for a discussion of it, I will only observe, that the plucking of the ears of corn was on a sabbath, immediately following a passover, and that it could have been no other, as Jesus remained during the next in Galilee; transcribing in support of this view a passage from Greswell's Dissertation: "Among the arguments intended to prove that this feast indefinitely mentioned could not be a passover, none perhaps

is more confidently put forward, and none is perhaps more weak and inconclusive, than the following; that the events recorded in this fifth chapter are not sufficient to have occupied a year, and that another passover is mentioned in the next. Very possibly they did not occupy a single day; but this argument proceeds upon the supposition, that St. John's gospel is complete in itself, and that it has no supplemental relation to the rest, the contrary to which is among the few positions that do not admit of a question; and this being the case, it is not to be considered whether St. John's gospel by itself supplies matter sufficient to have occupied a year, but whether Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in that portion of their gospels, the true place of which is between these extremes in his, can presumptively be shown to have; and upon this point the affirmative may be confidently asserted. The interval is, in fact, our Lord's second year, from the beginning of which to its end, by the miracle of feeding the 5000, there is no part unemployed, nor the mode of whose employment it is not possible clearly to ascertain." The third passover, which Jesus did not attend, is rejected as an interpolation by Bishop Pearce; and certainly, to those who do not consider that it might suit the Evangelist's purpose to insert a mark of time, it will appear to be an unnecessary interruption of the subject, which had better have been omitted. Still a conjectural emendation, invented to support a preconceived theory, would be inadmissible, even if the nature of St. John's gospel did not afford an ample vindication of the passage. The parable of the barren fig-tree is allowed by all to signify the Jewish nation; and we may suppose, that when the Lord of the vineyard says that he has come in vain for three years seeking fruit from it, Jesus refers to the duration of his own period of visitation. I consider then the period as settled.

We have next to determine which Evangelist shall be our guide. Doddridge follows the arrangement of Mark and Luke, supposing the testimony of two Evangelists to be preferable to that of one; while Sir Isaac Newton and Bishop Marsh defer to that of Matthew, because he was an eye-witness. This statement seems to impeach the accuracy of the Evangelist we desert; yet we claim not only credibility but inspiration for all. The necessity of making a choice apparently places us in a dilemma: but the following consideration will relieve us from our embarrassment. We concede, that Matthew must have known the order in which transactions took place; and if he could have forgotten it, the Holy Ghost that inspired him would, if necessary, have recalled it to his recollection. But though he knew the order, it is a gratuitous assumption that he followed it. His gospel seems to show, that he preferred a classification of events; and Luke's preface appears to indicate, that it was his own design to present them in the order of time. If indeed Matthew's order had been historical, we can hardly suppose that Mark, under the direction of Peter, would have deviated from it, or that Luke should have followed his example. Assuming, as I have done, that each Evangelist had seen the work of his predecessor, and meant his own for an improvement of it, I have no hesitation in adopting, with Doddridge and Newcome, the arrangement of the latest, though, as the latter observes, he has some anticipations and some resumptons. In fact, chronological order is not precisely adhered to by any. St. John and St. Mark observe it most, and St. Matthew least. When, however, there is any clear note of time or place in one of the Evangelists, the others may always be brought to an agreement with him, by easy and natural criticism; he affirming the order which they often overlook, but never contradict. All neglect, more or less, accurate order in the detail of particular incidents, as

appears from the phrase, *on one of those days*, and *at that time*; they sometimes join together detached and distant events, on account of a sameness in the scene, the person, the cause, or the consequences^a; and they often, particularly St. John, make transitions from one fact to another, without any intimation that important matters intervened. The gospels, therefore, cannot be deemed methodical annals.

From the difficulty of forming a complete Harmony, some divines, as Townsend, maintain, that it is better to explain each gospel separately. There is some force in his objections; yet, in my opinion, they do not outweigh the advantages of such a work, which of course does not presume to be a substitute for the gospels, but only to prepare the student for a more careful perusal of them. It may indeed be impossible to make a perfect one; still it must be allowed that many transactions may be harmonized; and Archbishop Newcome truly observes, that the juxtaposition of parallel passages is often the best comment, and that a Harmony greatly diminishes our labour in studying the phraseology and manner of the Evangelists. It proves, that Mark, who inserts so much new matter, did not merely abridge the gospel of Matthew; and it affords plain indications, not only that John's was designed to be a supplemental history, but that Mark and Luke had the same object in view, and therefore introduce additional circumstances which improve the preceding narrative. To prove this satisfactorily, we should have to transcribe almost the whole of the former, and a great part of the latter. I will mention but a few instances. Matthew (xxi.) records the withering of the barren fig-tree, and according to his manner comprehends in one statement the denunciation and

^a Thus Matthew unites the calling and the mission of the twelve, though the latter was long after the former; and Luke inserts the death of the Baptist long before it took place.

its fulfilment. Mark, (xi.) in repeating the miracle, assigns the reason why Jesus expected to find fruit on it, and corrects his predecessor by observing, that the withering was noticed on the following morning. Matthew (viii.) relates briefly the cure of the Centurion's servant. Luke, (vii.) who alone repeats it, adds, that he was too humble to apply in person, at least in the first instance, but solicited the cure through the Jewish rulers, who pleaded that he was worthy of this favour, because he loved their nation, and had built the synagogue at Capernaum. Mark (xvi.) informs us, that Jesus showed himself after the Resurrection in another form to two of his disciples as they were going into the country; and this appears to be the interesting journey to Emmaus detailed by Luke, (xxiv.) When the three record the same event, Mark enlarges materially Matthew's narrative, and Luke generally adds some particulars. Thus Matthew (ix.) relates the miraculous cure of the paralytic man with the remarkable speech of our Lord, and his commendation of the faith of those who brought him; but the reason of this commendation it was reserved for Mark (ii.) and Luke (v.) to give, the impossibility from the crowd of bringing him in by the door, and necessity of ascending an external staircase, to let down the sufferer through the roof, which they partially removed for the purpose. Jesus, who as usual was surrounded by hearers, broke off his discourse to heal him. Luke adds, that they were not only, as Mark calls them, certain of the Scribes, but Pharisees and doctors of the law, who had come out of every town, and even from Jerusalem. Again, Matthew (ix.) is content to tell us that a ruler besought him to cure his daughter, who was even dead, and that he went into his house, dismissed the mourners, saying that she only slept, and restored her to life. On his way he was delayed by a woman who had had twelve years an issue of blood, and was cured by touching the fringe of his cloak, and he commends her for her faith.

Mark (v.) gives the ruler's name, Jaïrus, and makes him say, *My little daughter lieth at the point of death*. He adds, that during the delay occasioned by the woman, his servants announce to him that she has died; that Jesus proceeded notwithstanding to the house, suffered only the parents and three of his Apostles to enter, and addressed the damsel, and that she was twelve years old. Luke (viii.) completes the narrative, by observing that she was his only daughter. Mark says that the woman had spent all that she had upon physicians, and grew worse; and that Jesus forced her to confess the truth before the crowd; but Luke, while agreeing with him in substance, differs in words.

Further, a Harmony in many instances illustrates the propriety of our Lord's conduct and language, and reasonably accounts for what must appear extraordinary to one who has read only a single gospel. Thus Mark (i. 16—20.) abruptly introduces the call of Peter and Andrew, and of James and John, and their prompt obedience, as if Jesus had then seen them for the first time. But we learn from John, (i. 35—40.) that Andrew had been originally a disciple of the Baptist, had heard his testimony to Jesus, had himself acknowledged him as the Messiah, and had brought to him his brother Simon, who then received the surname of Peter. It also appears from this gospel, that John himself had been a disciple of the Baptist; and that all three, though they had afterwards returned to their business of fishing, came with Jesus to Galilee, and were present at the wedding at Cana. A Harmony shows, that our Lord's declaration, (John v. 25.) *The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live*, was made prophetically, before the restoration to life of any who had died; and that his reproofs (Matt. xii. 34. Mark vii. 6.) were uttered after he had wrought miracles during two feasts at Jerusalem. We perceive also, that the jealousy of the Jewish rulers was not early awakened

by the call of the twelve Apostles to a stated attendance on their Lord, nor by the mission of the Seventy; for the former was not till he had kept his second passover, and was about to absent himself from Jerusalem for eighteen months; and the latter was only six months before his crucifixion. In a word, we are thus led to discover how one gospel supplies the deficiencies of the others, and are thereby the more convinced of the credibility of them all.

For the best historical and critical review of Harmonies, I refer to the Introduction to Townsend's valuable Arrangement of the New Testament, in which our Lord's history is carefully collected out of the schemes of Lightfoot, Doddridge, Pilkington, Newcome, and Michaelis, who are in his estimation the best guides. He considers that the beauty of the narrative is obscured or neglected by harmonizing with a reference only to the number of passovers, or the several journeys of our Lord; and we must agree with him, that the most instructive and edifying Harmony would be one that should gradually develope the Christian dispensation. The two schemes, however, are perfectly compatible; and this development is best shown by tracing the progresses of Jesus through the country. I add a sketch of his Arrangement, which aspires to trace the ministry of our Saviour not by dates, but by results. The first chapter, including the period from his birth to his temptation, is introductory to his ministry; and as he did not manifest himself to be the Messiah till the imprisonment of the Baptist, a separate chapter is assigned to this interval. The reply of the Baptist to the deputation from the authorities of Jerusalem, positively affirming the Messiahship of him, whom a miraculous descent of the Holy Spirit, and the voice of God, had marked as a superhuman Being, in the midst of assembled thousands—the uninvited attachment of the disciples of the Baptist to our Lord, when their master pointed him out as the Lamb of

God—the unostentatious miracle of Cana, when the silent operation of our Lord's power began to manifest his still concealed glory—his return to Capernaum with his family as the preaching of the Baptist continued—his still refusing to commit himself—and the final testimony of John—prove the very gradual manner in which he proceeded to attract the attention of the people, before he would offend the prejudices of those who expected a temporal Messiah. Though the ejecting the buyers and sellers from the temple may be considered as a public manifestation of his Messiahship, he did not verbally assert his claims till the Baptist was prevented from appealing to the people, when he returned to his own town, and there openly declared himself the Messiah; and this Townsend considers as the second stage in his ministry. The first persecution of our Lord began upon his hinting to his proud and jealous countrymen, that he had sheep of another fold; which caused the service of the synagogue to be interrupted, and disturbed the peace of the town. This explains his circumspection; for he did all he could, consistently with his character and object, to prevent the repetition of such scenes of exasperation and tumult. He proceeded therefore with the utmost caution, refusing to call himself the Messiah, charging the persons who were healed to tell no man, and keeping back many things even from the Apostles. The various sections of this chapter fully display the wisdom which continued thus gradually to impress the people with the conviction that he must be the Messiah. The deliverance of the demoniac, proved his power over evil spirits. By healing the leprosy, a disease considered incurable except by God, and by referring the cured leper to the priest, he exhibited another evidence of his divinity. He openly asserted his power to forgive sins, which he had already demonstrated by his cure of the paralytic man. He publicly wrought a miracle at Jerusalem, and

declared that he was appointed by the Father to judge the world, and was himself Lord of the Sabbath; and having attracted around him multitudes, he laid the foundation of his church in the appointment of the twelve Apostles. The fourth chapter includes the time from their mission to that of the Seventy; and the fifth, the period from their appointment to his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The deeper impression produced by the preaching of his Apostles and of the Seventy, and by his own example, miracles, and teaching, begin to appear more plainly. The agitation of the public mind at Jerusalem—his increased boldness as his personal danger became greater—his assertion of his divinity, and the consequent determination of the Jews to apprehend him—successively prove the wisdom of the plan upon which our Lord acted, of gradually convincing the people, and then submitting to his painful death. No sooner was the resolution to seize him taken, than his lamentations over Jerusalem begin, and his parables assume a more prophetic character, descriptive of the reception of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews. At length he works his greatest miracle, the raising of Lazarus from the dead, with which he closes his ministry, from his procession to the Temple, till his submission to the guard to whom he was betrayed. And as the time of his betrayal was come, he did not hesitate to reprove, with more boldness than he had hitherto shown, the sects among his countrymen. The seventh chapter contains his trial and crucifixion. The Lamb of God is sacrificed, the atonement is accepted, and man is pardoned. All unite to reject our Lord: the power of Rome, the religious hatred of his apostate church, the changeable populace, combined to fulfil the prophecies, and slay the willing sacrifice. In the midst of these scenes our Lord never forgot his divinity: when dying as a man, he forgave sins as God; and while he refused to come down from the cross, declared his power as Lord of the

invisible world. The last chapter opens with his victory over the grave, commencing in his resurrection, and ending with his Ascension, to sit down, a Priest upon his throne, on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Having decided upon a Harmony, the result may be exhibited either in columns, or in an unbroken narrative. The former is calculated for reference, the latter for perusal. In the former the student judges for himself, in the latter he may be thought to be too much under the influence of the compiler. Tatian, the first who arranged one, called his work *Monotessaron*, one narrative collected out of the four Evangelists, and *Diatessaron*, or a narrative according to the four. The first title was applied to a later Harmony of mediæval times by Clement, Prior of Llantonny Abbey, who lived in the middle of the twelfth century, and was translated by Wycliffe. Tatian's *Diatessaron* has perished, but the latter name has been revived by Dr. White, who has thrown Archbishop Newcome's Harmony into this form, and follows him with very few deviations except in the narration of the Resurrection, in which he prefers West's scheme, as modified by Townson. I may occasionally prefer the arrangement of other harmonists; but I consider the precise order, if attainable, as less important, than the bringing together all the particulars of each transaction; and I am desirous that the following observations may be read (as they were originally delivered) after a perusal of the Text, and therefore I have adopted the Harmony that is in general use.

SECTION III.

The genuineness, credibility, and inspiration of the New Testament.

WE have shown from Irenæus, (iii. 1.) that in his time the gospels were ascribed to their respective authors; and he lived little more than a century after their publication, and had learnt Christianity from those who had been taught by the last of the Apostles. In the passage preceding the one already quoted, he says, "We have not received the knowledge of the way of our salvation from any others than those by whom the gospel has been brought to us, which they first preached, and afterwards, by the will of God, committed to writing, that it might be for the time to come, the foundation and pillar of our faith. For after that our Lord rose from the dead, and the Apostles were endowed from above with the power of the Holy Ghost, and received a perfect knowledge of all things, they went forth to all the ends of the earth, declaring to men the blessing of heavenly peace, having all of them, and every one alike, the gospel of God." These gospels, or good tidings, as contained in the works of the four Evangelists, appear to have been read in the Christian assemblies during divine service as soon as they were published. Such at least we know, from Justin Martyr's first Apology for Christianity, presented to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, A.D. 140, was the custom in his time; and the testimony of Tertullian for Africa, and of Origen for Egypt and Palestine, in the following century, proves that this was not a local, but the universal practice of Christian congregations. The fact then of the existence and reception of the four gospels from the beginning cannot be disputed.

Some, however, may say, that they have perished, and that these we now read are not genuine. To such objectors,

if such there be, I would say with Mr. Lancaster^b, "Suppose a man were at this day to try to pass off a counterfeit book as the work of St. Paul, or St. John, what would be his success? And can we imagine any time in which the task would not have been as impossible as now? Or, to use a more familiar example, suppose any man should forge an Act of Parliament, and attempt to pass it off as having been enacted by the Legislature: how many, think you, would submit to the imposture, and receive his forgery as the authentic law of the land? especially if his pretended law required from the subject any painful duties to perform, or considerable sacrifice of his interest or property. And does not reason assure us, that it would be an utter impossibility thus to forge the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, since these require men to die to the world, to renounce its sinful lusts and profits, and to seek their happiness in an invisible and future kingdom?" "Let it be remembered, that the doctrines of the New Testament profess to be written or attested by men endued with the power of miracles and prophecy, and that they profess at the same time to be written for the instruction, in the first instance, of contemporaries. How then could they be first brought to light in a later age, or by persons who were not known to possess those powers which they alleged in proof of their authority?" The task of imposing a literary forgery upon the world has been almost invariably found to baffle the utmost circumspection and ingenuity, for the slightest failure in any particular will lay open the fraud; but the hazard is greatly increased when the work is of any length, especially, says Lardner, if it be historical, and be concerned with characters and customs. The New Testament would present peculiar difficulties, from the style and language, which are neither those of the classics nor the fathers, and are what could

^b Bampton Lectures, page 63.

^c Lancaster, page 64.

only be expected from the Apostles and Evangelists; and the precepts and the religious spirit that pervade the epistles and gospels are such as no impostor would either be desirous or capable of giving. Our statement is not a mere supposition, but is confirmed by the fact; for the apocryphal writings supply the attempt and the failure. The universal reception of the same Canon for so many ages is in itself evidence sufficient that our Scriptures are, as they profess to be, the genuine productions of the authorized teachers of our faith. "Where do you find a church, or a sect, which rejects any of the books which we receive, or receives any book which we do not receive?" However much they may vary in doctrine or discipline, "the dispute is not about the authority, but the interpretation, of the books^d." This concurrence is remarkable and of great weight, especially as it seems to have been the result of private and free inquiry; for we have no knowledge of any interference of authority in the question before the Council of Laodicæa, A.D. 363; and that did not regulate but declare the public judgment already formed. It did no more than determine that private psalms ought not to be read in the church, nor any books not canonical; and then gave a catalogue of such, both of the Old and the New Testament. There was no need of a synod of grammarians, says Le Clerc, to declare magisterially what are the works of Cicero or Virgil; and we do not read of any assembly of the governors of churches, convened to determine by their authority that so many gospels should be received; and in this he only repeats the observation of Augustine. We know the writings of the Apostles as we know those of Plato and Aristotle, forasmuch as they have the testimony of contemporary and succeeding authors: and we have the additional satisfaction of knowing, that this concurrence was the result, not of

^d Lancaster, page 65.

an easy acquiescence, but of diligent enquiry, as shown both by the rejection of apocryphal books, and the doubt entertained for a season concerning a few canonical ones, which ended in their universal reception. The prevalence of this doubt and the silence of antiquity disprove the opinion, that the Canon of the New Testament had been settled by St. John; but the fact that he had read the three earlier gospels, and added his own as a supplement, gives his infallible authority to that portion of it with which we are at present concerned.

The genuineness of the gospels (and the same may be affirmed of all the books of the New Testament) is supported by the substantial sameness of the text in all versions. Take those of the Roman Catholics, in English, French, Italian, or any other language, and you will find that they are all derived from what is called the Vulgate, that is, the Latin translation of St. Jerome in the fifth century. Take our own, and you will perceive it to be nearly the same; not precisely, because it is translated from the original Greek; and if you ask where that is to be found, we say, in the many manuscripts of it still extant, some of which may be as old as the fourth century. These books having always been regarded as authority, from which there was no appeal, they were quoted from the beginning, as now, both in the controversial and in the explanatory writings of Christian divines; and some had occasion, or inclination, to do this at greater length than others. Dr. Mill says of Origen, that if we had all his works remaining, we should have before us almost the whole text of the Bible; and in those of Tertullian, his contemporary, says Lardner, there are more and larger quotations of the small volume of the New Testament, than of all the works of Cicero, by writers of all characters for several ages. Paley justly remarks, that to pursue the detail of proofs throughout, would be to transcribe a great part of Lardner's eleven octavo volumes;

and to leave the argument without proofs, is to leave it without effect; for the persuasion produced by this species of evidence depends upon a view and induction of the particulars which compose it. To his well-known Evidences I refer for a perspicuous analysis of it, as extending upward from Eusebius to the immediate followers of the Apostles; and upon the theory here maintained, it may, for the gospels, be carried up to the inspired writers themselves, making Luke bear testimony to Matthew and Mark, and both Luke and Mark to Matthew. These writings are equally accredited by heretics, and by the opponents of Christianity; for the emperor Julian in the fourth century, Porphyry in the third, and Celsus in the second, appeal to the same Scriptures as the orthodox. Books so highly esteemed, which were studied at home, read out in public, and quoted in controversies, were multiplied both in the original and in translations as early as the second century, so that they became universally known wherever there were Christians, and they were soon found in every province of the Roman empire. It would be therefore an absolute impossibility, at any period, to substitute false gospels for the true, unless we can conceive, that men of different nations, opinions, and languages, orthodox, unbelievers, and heretics, should all agree to impose upon the world one and the same forgery.

The genuineness of the gospels having been ascertained, their credibility remains to be established; for, in order to believe the contents of any history, we ought to be satisfied, not only that the person who records it is what he professes to be, but that he has had the opportunity and ability of knowing the truth, and the honesty to relate it. Now if these books were written by the persons, and at the time asserted, we may say with Lardner, that their contents must be true; and if the miracles which they record as wrought

by Christ be genuine, the doctrine they announce must be a divine Revelation.

It has been frequently shown, that the credibility of the New Testament, though not admitting of demonstration, has been proved by moral evidence quite as satisfactory; and that this is more abundant and complete than can be brought in support of any other work. Two of the Evangelists were witnesses, and the others competent reporters, of the facts which they attest; and upon these rest the proofs of Christianity. They were not enthusiasts, and therefore could not be deceived; while their piety, integrity, and disinterestedness, their sacrifice of their earthly prospects, and their sufferings, are a guarantee that they would not wish to deceive others, and could have no inducement to make the attempt. We might safely accept from men of this character even a narrative intermixed with miracles; but as our hopes are to be built upon what they record, and our conduct to be regulated by their testimony, it is, if not necessary, at least desirable, that they should be secured against the possibility of error. In modern times, there are even Christians who deny the inspiration of the Bible, and maintain, that, allowing the authors to be left to the use of their own faculties, without any supernatural assistance, we have sufficient grounds for believing the accuracy of their report. The evidence may be sufficient to claim our assent, and to render disbelief blameable; still they must concede, that it would be more satisfactory to know that the record which contains the dogmas of our faith, and the history of our Saviour and his Apostles, is the word of God. Such has been from the beginning the belief of the Church; and from this position we deduce the great Protestant principle of the sufficiency of holy Scripture; so that, to use the language of our sixth Article, “ whatsoever

is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Christian faith." We are assured by St. Paul, (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.) that the Scriptures which Timothy *had known from infancy*, which must have been those of the Old Testament, *were able to make him wise unto salvation*; and he proceeds to say, that *all Scripture is inspired, and able to perfect the man of God, and thoroughly to furnish him to all good works*. Many of the books of the Old Testament are cited expressly as Scripture in the New; our Lord has repeatedly (Luke xxiv. 44.) given the sanction of his authority to these *oracles of God committed to the Jews*, (and by them, as we may infer from his silence, faithfully kept,) declaring that they testify of him—that they who know them cannot err—that they must be fulfilled, and that they cannot be broken. Arguing from analogy, we might be justified in predicating inspiration of the authors of the New Testament, even if the Saviour's promise, that he would send the Holy Spirit *to guide them into all the truth, and to bring whatever he had said unto them to their remembrance*, had not been recorded, and we had not known historically that it had been speedily and abundantly fulfilled. This, which from the nature of the case appears to us to be highly probable, they who alone could really know it as a fact, continually affirm as true, speaking of their own teaching as equally authoritative as that of the writers under the Jewish Dispensation. Thus St. Paul in almost every epistle asserts his own inspiration. In the first to the Thessalonians, supposed to be his earliest, which he charges them to read to all the brethren, he ventures to say, (iv. 8.) *He that despiseth* (what I write), *despiseth not man, but God, who has given us his Holy Spirit*: and he tells the Corinthians, (1 Ep. ii. 13.) that he speaks *not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the*

Holy Ghost teacheth. We are of God, says St. John; *he that knoweth God, heareth us*: (1 Ep. iv. 8.) and St. Peter, who writes with the authority of one who had been an eyewitness of his Lord's Majesty, when with him on the holy mount, classing the Pauline Epistles with the other Scriptures, puts them on a level with the Old Testament. We know, that upon the day of Pentecost *the Spirit gave the Apostles utterance*, and that thenceforth *they spake the word of God with boldness*. It is at least as desirable, that what they *wrote* for the edification of all ages should be inspired, as what they *spoke* for the instruction of their own; and we may confidently appeal to their writings, as containing within themselves sufficient evidence of their own authority, especially when we recollect the station and education of the authors. Not only do they contain doctrines at variance with their original prepossessions, but some which their Master did not deem it expedient to communicate to them during his personal ministry. The expressions moreover as well as the ideas have sometimes a majestic and divine simplicity, which seems to surpass the unassisted faculties of man. "The wiser and better any man is," says Doddridge^a, "and the more familiarly he converses with these unequalled books, the more he will be struck with this evidence. But several of the arguments arise not from particular passages, but from their general tenor; and consequently they cannot be judged of but by a serious and attentive perusal." It will however in a degree be brought out at once by the force of contrast, if we make the transition from the New Testament to the very earliest and best of the uncanonical Christian writers. Thus Clement of Rome was the contemporary of St. Paul,

^a Dissertation on the Inspiration of the New Testament, in the Family Expositor, vol. iii.

and he also wrote to the Corinthians; but such is the difference between the inspired and uninspired authors, that we may appeal to the taste and judgment of all, when we affirm, that the internal evidence is decisive. Let us also remember, that Clement and the other Apostolical fathers cite passages from the New Testament as Scripture, but never claim the like authority for their own writings. One cannot therefore but feel, that the Apostles wrote under some powerful hold, which at once guided and restrained them, and that in the simplicity, purity, and orderly keeping of all the parts in this venerable record, we have an internal evidence of as broad a distinction between the canonical and the uncanonical, as either the authority of the Church, or the innumerable written testimonies of the Christian fathers, would serve to establish.

Among those who allow the inspiration of Scripture, there is a difference both as to its extent and its nature. Some are for restricting it to those who were invested with the Apostolical office, thus excluding two of the Evangelists. The distinction, however, is not warranted by Scripture, and does not appear to be reasonable; for works approved by inspired men seem to carry with them as much authority as those they wrote. Now we learn from ecclesiastical history, that Mark's gospel was approved by St. Peter, and Luke's by St. Paul; and we cannot doubt, that St. John, by writing his own as a supplement to the preceding three, gave an equal attestation to them all. As to the nature of inspiration, a distinction is justly drawn between the inspiration of *suggestion*, which makes discoveries to the mind, and often dictates the very words in which they should be communicated, and the inspiration of *superintendence*, which leaves an author to express himself in his own manner, but watches over him to secure him from error. The former has been often so injudiciously pressed,

that it has driven many as unreasonably to deny the latter. If we maintain a plenary verbal inspiration, I know not how we can explain the peculiarities of manner and idiom; why, for instance, St. Paul's style should differ from that of St. James, or Luke should write better greek than Mark. I apprehend that the Bible affords example of both. Few, it appears to me, can doubt the plenary inspiration of Jehovah's declarations by his Prophets, and of the Epistles to the seven Asiatic Churches, dictated by our Lord to St. John; and the same may, I conceive, be inferred of many striking passages in those of his Apostles, which, from their comprehensive energy, and most happy selection of words, have been found to be as suitable to distant generations of different countries and manners, as to their own. Our Lord's discourses being only translations, and given with verbal differences, come under the second division. Works for which we claim no higher an inspiration than that of suggestion, admit of imperfection in style and method; "for if," as Doddridge observes, "such works are not intended as exact standards for oratory, but only to teach us truth in order to its having a proper influence on our temper and actions; such human imperfections as may mingle with it would no more warrant our rejecting its authority, than the want of a ready utterance or a musical voice would excuse our disregard of a person who should bring us competent evidence of his being a messenger from God to us." "We believe then, that the Spirit of God directed the Apostles not only in their addresses to their contemporaries, but in their epistles, which were meant as a legacy to the Church for ever; and that each Evangelist was guided to select and omit as would best suit his immediate object in writing, and the edification of believers to the end of time. And we believe every line of the New Testament to be stamped with un-

erring truth, and to be the voice of God speaking in the language of men^b."

The fact and the mode of inspiration are apt to be confounded. Is the Bible the word of God? Is it given by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, so as to have "God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its subject?" Or is it only the word of man? Or is it partly the word of man, and partly the word of God, containing truth or error as the case may be? These are questions of fact, to be determined on the evidence of those credentials, in virtue of which the Bible asserts its authority over every soul of man, and appeals to the final judgment-seat of the eternal Jehovah. The most decided supporter of its authority is our Lord himself; for he quenched from Deuteronomy all the fiery darts of the apostate spirit, deigning no other answer to his subtle temptations than *it is written*, and left the seal of his own authority upon the whole, when in a single sentence he acknowledged as the word of God the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, under which term the whole volume was then comprehended. The fact being admitted, the mode is of less importance. The investigation may be presumptuous, and to determine it appears to be beyond the capacity of one who is not himself inspired. We know that the Holy Spirit as he saw fit employed different agents irrespective of their moral or even intellectual character. Once even a brute was mechanically and unconsciously made the instrument of rebuking Balaam; and his covetous master was constrained to declare, *I have received commandment to bless, and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it; all that the Lord speaketh, that I must do*^c. Another wicked man is made to bear unconscious testimony to the priestly office of this king whom Balaam had so many centuries

^b Rennell in reply to Hone.

^c Numbers xxiii. 20. 26.

before announced; while he fancied he was only uttering the suggestions of his own carnal policy. On other occasions we read *of prophets searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did testify*^d, when conscious that their understandings were but partially enlightened. On others we find Evangelists and Apostles inspired to record the things which were brought to their remembrance, and also to omit much which we should have been delighted to read. Yet in this variety of operation of the same Spirit, which our finite intellect cannot fathom, we hear as it were the voice from heaven, proclaiming the great *fact*, that *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God*^e, and that *holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*^f.

SECTION IV.

On the original Text.

THE arguments which establish the genuineness and authenticity of the books of the New Testament, are no less satisfactory in proving the substantial integrity of the text. For it is difficult to conceive how important variations could be introduced into writings so highly valued, read by many at home, and heard by more in the congregation, and existing in so many distant places both in the original and in versions. If copies of one country had been corrupted by negligence or design, falsifications would have been detected by those of another. It must be observed, however, that it is only the *substantial integrity* that is maintained; the

^d 1 Peter i. 11.

^e 2 Tim. iii. 16.

^f 2 Peter i. 21.

absolute identity of the most approved manuscripts, with the autograph of the original authors, is an untenable position. The Bible has been left by Providence to the care of fallible men; and it is now allowed, that no one perfect copy of either the Old or the New Testament is extant, and that the text must be collected from a critical examination of all.

The more numerous the transcripts and the translations from the originals, the more likely it is that the true reading should be ascertained. The most correct classical works are those of which there are the most manuscripts; and the most corrupt are those that have come down to us in one; since their text can only be improved by conjecture. As might be supposed, the manuscripts of the New Testament far exceed in number those of any other work. Bishop Marsh^g gives a critical examination of four hundred and sixty-nine; and I refer those who wish for fuller information to that examination, and to Mr. Horne's comprehensive Introduction to the Scriptures^h, which may be almost said to exhaust the subject. He describes seventeen in capital characters, which are called uncial, and many more in smaller letters. Griesbach collated 353; and Beck, in his *Monogrammata Hermeneutices*, has enumerated 394, which are all that are known to have been collated, exclusive of *Lectionaria Enchologia*, and *Menologia*, that is, the prayer books and martyrologies of the Greek church; but there are still many, and some of ancient date, in public libraries, which have never been examined. Three of the most celebrated, the Vatican, the Alexandrian, and the Ephrem of the uncial manuscripts, contain the whole Bible, but they are mutilated: the Revelation and some of the Pauline epistles are wanting in the first, the second has lost nearly

^g Translation of Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament.

^h Vol. ii. ch. 2.

the whole of Matthew's gospel, and there are numerous chasms in the third. The first, written probably in Egypt in the fifth century, still remains in the Papal library. The second, so called, because presented to Charles I. by Cyril Lucaris, formerly patriarch of Alexandria, is now preserved with the rest of the ancient Royal library in the British Museum, and vies in antiquity with the former. The third, which is in the public library at Paris, is a palimpsest, the text of which was partially erased to receive the writings of the Syrian saint Ephrem, is thought by Professor Hug to be older even than the Alexandrian, and is pronounced by Marsh to date at least from the seventh century. Few manuscripts contain even the whole New Testament: the greater part have only the gospels, because they were the most frequently read out in the church; others contain the Acts with the catholic epistles; some the Acts with those of St. Paul; and manuscripts of the Apocalypse are very rare. Some, of early date, are accompanied with a Latin version more ancient than the Vulgate. There are also Lectionaries, which have only the portions selected for lessons. Generally speaking, the earliest are the most valuable, but scarcely any are dated; their age therefore is conjectural, and there is a considerable difference of opinion among those who have studied the subject. Thus Woide, who edited a fac-simile of the New Testament portion of the Alexandrian MS., maintains, that it was written towards the end of the fourth century, while Michaelis assigns it to the eighth, and Oudin to the tenth. The Cambridge MS., which bears the name of Beza, because presented by that Reformer to the University, a Greek and Latin MS. of the Gospels and the Acts, is referred to the second century by Dr. Kipling the editor, and is considered by Michaelis to be the most ancient extant; while it is supposed by others to have been written in the fifth,

the sixth, or even the seventh century. The Latin and Greek MS. of the Acts, called the Laudian, because given by Archbishop Laud to the Bodleian library, is assigned by Hearne its editor to the eighth century, while Astle thinks that it was written early in the fifth.

Still there are criteria which will enable us to form a probable estimate of their relative ages; and even those who have not access to the manuscripts themselves, have in a degree the power of judging, as specimens of several of the most important have been published by Horne; and the Beza and the Alexandrian MSS. have been edited entire in types which exactly represent the original characters. These criteria are derived from the material on which they are written, or from the character employed. Vellum came earlier into use than paper; and cotton paper was invented in the ninth century, and linen in the twelfth. Small characters were not generally employed till the close of the tenth, and uncial letters differ in form and other particulars. They are the original letters, and are found on inscriptions, and being written like one word, without any marks of distinction, and sometimes continued in the next line, are difficult to read. The following transcript from Horne's Introduction of the opening of St. John's gospel in the Alexandrian MS. will give a better idea of this inconvenient mode of writing than any description, and the passage I have chosen shows how easily the greek word for God, as thus abbreviated, might be confounded with the pronoun. I have used the ordinary character, but a facsimile of the original has been copied in Horne from Woide's edition.

ΕΝΑΡΧΗ Η ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΑΙ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ Η
 ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ Θ̄Ν ΚΑΙ Θ̄Σ Η ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ
 ΟΥΤΟΣ Η ΝΕΝΑΡΧΗ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ Θ̄Ν
 ΠΑΝΤΑ ΔΙΑ ΤΟΥΤΕ ΓΕΝΕΤΟ ΚΑΙ ΧΩ
 ΡΕΙΣ ΑΥΤΟΥΤΕ ΓΕΝΕΤΟ ΟΥΤ ΔΕ ΕΝ
 ΟΓΕΓΟΝ ΕΝΕΝΑ ΤΤΩ ΖΩΗ ΗΝ
 ΚΑΙ Η ΖΩΗ ΗΝ ΤΟ ΦΩΣ ΤΩ ΝΑΝΩΝ.

It would appear thus in English :

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD
 AND THE WORD WAS
 WITH ḠD AND ḠD WAS THE WORD
 HE WAS IN THE BEGINNING WITH ḠD
 ALL WERE MADE BY HIM AND WITH
 OUT HIM WAS MADE NOT ONE THING
 THAT WAS MADE IN HIM LIFE WAS
 AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF M̄N.

There are also internal marks of age. Ammonius in the third century made a new division of the gospels; and therefore of course none which, like the Alexandrian MS., have his sections can be earlier than that date. As these divisions were subsequently recommended by the ecclesiastical historian Eusebius, they are frequently called by his name. They are clearly represented in Erasmus's editions, and in Robert Stephens's of 1550. Stichometry affords another internal criterion, and shows that the Beza and Laud MSS., which are arranged in conformity to it, are less ancient than persons unacquainted with that invention have supposed. It was about the middle of the fifth century that Euthalius, an Egyptian Bishop, divided the New Testament into *stichoi*, that is, lines to direct the reader in pausing. As some of these were exceedingly short, containing sometimes only a word, in the course of time in order to save space a point was substituted for a blank at the end of each, and this gave rise to punctuation. I give as a specimen

from Horne's Introduction^e, his transcript of a passage from Titus ii. 2, 3. from the Codex Coislinianus H.

That the aged men be sober

Grave

Temperate

Sound in Faith

In Patience

The Aged Woman Likewise

In Behaviour As Becometh Holiness

Not False Accusers

Not Given To Much Wine

Teachers Of Good Things.

Parchment being expensive, writings were obliterated to substitute others more in request. And this was often so imperfectly effected, that traces of the original may be discerned; and from manuscripts of this description, which are known by the name of Palimpsesti and Rescripti, the perseverance of modern scholars has restored the text of the Greek Scriptures, as well as considerable portions of the Classics. St. Matthew's gospel was thus partially recovered by Dr. Barrett, 1801, from a Rescript in the library of the University of Dublin, and the whole Bible from the Ephrem MS.

When the unlearned hear of 30,000 various readings, collected by Dr. Mill, and of 150,000, which Griesbach's critical edition is said to contain, it is not surprising that they should be alarmed. The result, however, of these investigations is the very reverse of what they fear, for this minute examination of manuscripts, versions, and quotations from the fathers, has established the substantial integrity of the text. Of this mass of readings, which at first sight appears so formidable, not one hundredth part makes any material alteration in the sense. They consist principally of palpable errors in transcribing, or of grammatical differ-

^e Part I. ch. iv. s. 2.

ences, which cannot be represented in a translation. Some are intended corrections, in which easier words are substituted for those that are obscure, and some are attempts to bring the text nearer to the classical idiom. Others, it is true, change the meaning; but the change is generally of little importance, as *found* for *saw*, Matt. ii. 11. and v. 47. *heathen* for *publican*. Marginal notes have occasionally been transferred to the text; words that copyists did not understand, or thought superfluous, have been omitted; and parallel passages have been altered, to render their conformity to each other more perfect. Wilful corruption has been charged upon the ancient heretics, and by them upon the orthodox; but, under Divine Providence, attempts of this kind have been defeated, as from the many copies extant, either of the original, or of early versions, it was impossible that they could tamper with all. Instances of these readings are, *Neither the Son*, Mark xiii. 32. *Born of thee*, Luke i. 35. *There appeared an angel to him from heaven strengthening him*, Luke xxii. 43. *Before they came together*, Matt. i. 18. all of which may be established, I believe, as genuine. The most remarkable omissions are the twelve concluding verses of Mark's gospel, which Griesbach retains; the history of the woman taken in adultery^f, (John

^f This history is found in all the Latin manuscripts, and in most of the Greek, but does not appear in that of the Vatican and some others of note, nor in the Gothic and Syriac versions. It is rejected by Origen, and is not noticed by Chrysostom and other commentators. Calvin, Beza, Grotius, Hammond, Le Clerc, and Griesbach decide against its authenticity, which is maintained by Michaelis and Middleton. The first who mentions it is Tatian, who flourished A.D. 160. Dr. Mill thinks that it was marked with an obelisk, that it might not be read out in public, and that it was in consequence dropped by transcribers. Its omission requires some alteration in the following verse; and I for one cannot conceive how any writer could have invented an incident so much in harmony with our Lord's character.

viii. 1—11.) which he inclines to think ought to be rejected; and the testimony of the three heavenly witnesses, in St. John's first epistle^g, (v. 7.) which, with the almost unani-

^g The testimony of the three heavenly witnesses is celebrated for the many learned discussions which it has occasioned, from the days of Erasmus to our own; and the controversy has been of great service, as it has contributed, probably, more than any other, to the improvement of Biblical criticism. Butler, in his *Horæ Biblicæ*, gives a condensed statement of the evidence on both sides; but the most complete view may be seen in Horne's *Introduction to the Scriptures*. It was omitted by Erasmus, in his first edition of the Greek Testament; but he promised to insert it in a future one, if the passage could be shown him in a manuscript; and, as he says, to avoid calumny, he introduced it into his third. A single authentic manuscript in which it occurs was produced, the *Codex Montfortii*, now in the library of Dublin University, for which a higher date is not claimed than the thirteenth century. It appeared also in the *Complutensian Bible*; but we cannot judge of the character of the manuscripts used for that work, as they are lost: it is not found in any of the ancient versions except the *Vulgate*, and only in some manuscripts of that; nor is it quoted by any of the Greek fathers, even when they appeal to the preceding and succeeding verses. It is therefore rejected by the most approved critics: still, Dr. Nolan and Dr. Hales have endeavoured to re-establish its credit; and bishops Middleton and Burgess argue strongly in its favour. It is found in the *Liturgies of the Greek and Latin Church*, and is cited by the Latin fathers. In my opinion, the objections are outweighed by the internal evidence, which at least justifies our suspending our judgment; for omission leaves the sense imperfect; (a comparison being introduced in the ninth verse, between the testimony of men and the testimony of God, in which the apostle must refer to these heavenly witnesses;) and vitiates in two particulars the grammatical structure of the original, which I must copy to render my remarks intelligible; *τρῆς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες, τὸ πνεῦμα, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸ αἷμα· καὶ οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσιν*. The text, as proposed, makes a masculine participle agree with three neuter nouns, whereas it would have been required by the two masculine ones *Πατήρ* and *Λόγος*; and the *τὸ ἓν* of the disputed text, the one testimony must refer to the testimony in the preceding verse. Unitarians

mous concurrence of critics, he treats as an interpolation. Of the readings which he condemns, or holds doubtful, few affect any doctrine or precept. There are, however, two, which in the Received Text unequivocally assert the divinity of the Saviour; *the Church of God, which he hath purchased by his own blood*^b, (Acts xx. 28.) and *God manifest*

exult in its rejection, as if the doctrine of the Trinity must be rejected with it; and indeed incautious Trinitarians have led them to this boasting, by exaggerating its importance. All candid persons will allow, that more decisive texts may be brought forward, as the baptismal form, and St. Paul's benediction. Indeed, it seems only indirectly to support this dogma, for it is the apostle's design to urge the unity, not of the nature, but of the testimony, of the three Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, to the leading truth of the gift of eternal life through the Son of God. It may be proper to observe, as Griesbach is opposed to this and other readings favourable to the Trinitarian hypothesis, that he had himself no Unitarian bias; "for there are," he says, "so many arguments for the true Deity of Christ, that I see not how it can be called in question, the divine authority of Scripture being granted, and just rules of interpretation acknowledged. The exordium of St. John's Gospel in particular is so perspicuous, and above all exception, that it never can be overturned by the daring attacks of interpreters and critics."

^b Of Acts xx. 28. there are no less than six various readings;

1. Feed the church of God.
2. ————— of Christ; old Syriac, but in no Greek manuscript.
3. ————— of the Lord; preferred by Griesbach and Wetstein, and found in the Alexandrian and most of the uncial MSS.
4. ————— of the Lord and God; Complutensian Polyglott, Slavonic version, and many MSS., but not the most authentic ones.
5. ————— of the God and Lord, only one MS.
6. ————— of the Lord God, only one MS.

Upon the whole, the external evidence preponderates in favour of the received text, which is found in the Vatican manuscript and in the Vulgate, as well as in most of the fathers, beginning with

in the flesh, (1 Tim. iii. 16.) He decides against the first, but speaks concerning the secondⁱ with some hesitation. Their authenticity is considered in a note; yet even granting that we must surrender both, and also the heavenly witnesses, the candid will allow that the Trinity and the Incarnation of the Son of God, are directly affirmed in other passages, the genuineness of which has never been doubted; that they pervade St. John's gospel, and are evidently assumed throughout the epistles as the basis of reasoning and exhortation. It has therefore been justly

Ignatius; and the expression is in unison with St. Paul's style, occurring no less than eleven times in his epistles, whereas *the Church of the Lord* is a phrase unknown to the New Testament. It is, however, frequent in the Septuagint, from which it may have found its way into the Alexandrian manuscript. But it should be recollected, that in that version, *Lord* is the translation of Jehovah. If, observes Michaelis, Luke wrote Θεοῦ, the origin of Κυρίου and Χριστοῦ may be explained either as a correction of the text, or a marginal note, the blood of God being an extraordinary expression; but if he had written Κυρίου, it is inconceivable how any one should alter it into Θεοῦ.

ⁱ The passage in the first epistle to Timothy has three variations, Θεός, Ος, Ο; and those who know that the first is in uncial manuscripts contracted to ΘΣ. will see at once how easily one reading might be substituted for the other. The page in the Alexandrian which contains it is so worn, that its reading can no longer be ascertained; but it seems from Dr. Berriman's Discourses that there is no ground for doubting that it supported the Received Text, which is found at least in a hundred others. The Vulgate reads *Quod*, answering to the Ο of the Clermont manuscript. A reference to the context will show that the dispute is not material, for Paul is evidently speaking not of the dogmas but of the author of Christianity, as seems unquestionable, from the terms *manifest in the flesh, seen of angels, received up into glory*; and the only difference, if we substitute the pronoun, is, that we must go back for an antecedent to the contested word Θεός, which we shall find in the genitive case in the preceding verse; so that whichever reading we prefer, the sense will be the same, though it is more perspicuously stated in the Received Text.

observed, that “when the eyes of the understanding are opened, and the soul made acquainted with, and attentive to, its own state and wants, he that runs may read the Divinity of the Saviour, not in a few detached texts of a dubious import, and liable to be twisted and tortured by the arts of criticism; but as interwoven in the very frame and texture of the Bible, and written in it as with a sunbeam^k.”

We know not how long the autograph copies of the books of the New Testament were preserved, but they must have soon perished; for citations different from the Received Text are found in the earliest fathers, which could hardly have occurred, as long as there was the power of correcting them by the originals. Some of these differences indeed may be explained by the habit of quoting from memory; but Clement of Alexandria, who died early in the third century, (*Strom.* iv.) specifies various readings properly so called, and several of his own differ from the Received Text, and agree with that of Beza’s MS. This variation must in his time have attracted attention, for Celsus his contemporary accuses the Christians of designedly corrupting the text; and Origen allows that it had been done by the Gnostics, but maintains that the charge was unjustly brought against the orthodox. In his Homily on Matthew xix. 19. he speaks of many differences in that and the other gospels, and points out as causes, the negligence of transcribers, the wicked rashness of those who purposely altered, and the liberty taken by others, of adding or expunging according to their own judgment. He goes on to speak of what he had accomplished for the correction of the Septuagint, and of the difficulty of restoring the text of the New Testament; but neither in this, nor in any other passage, does he refer to any autograph copy. Some therefore of these readings are previous to any manuscripts now

^k Newton’s *Cardiphonia*, vol. ii. p. 10.

extant, none of which at the utmost can be traced higher than the fourth century; and consequently the Versions prior to that period, as the Syriac and the Vulgate, having been translated from earlier copies, have a critical value scarcely, if at all, inferior to that of the original text.

The diligence of collators in modern times having accumulated thousands of various readings, critics began to think of laying down rules for determining their comparative merit. In prosecuting the study, they observed a resemblance between the versions and MSS. of the same countries, and discovered, they believed, from a comparison of the quotations of the text by the Egyptian and Latin fathers, that there had existed as early as the third century two families or editions of the New Testament. One of these is the Received Text, which is found in the majority of manuscripts; the other is contained in those that accord with the Vulgate; and Bentley conceived a project of forming a correct text, by adapting the former to the latter. Bengel and Semler suggested a more comprehensive system, which was completed and established by Griesbach. For the authority of Jerome, who lived in the fifth century, they substituted that of Origen, who lived in the third; and the attention which he paid above all the ancients to biblical criticism, seems to entitle him to this preference. To these two families Griesbach added a third, and named them from the countries in which he supposed them to prevail, the Alexandrian, the Western, and the Byzantine. Finding a striking coincidence between the quotations of Origen and the celebrated MS. brought from Alexandria, where he first distinguished himself as a teacher, Griesbach assigns the manuscripts which accord with these to his Alexandrian family. The Western family he formed of another set principally found in Europe, which, where they differ from the peculiar readings of the other two, possess

many coincidences both with the Oriental and the Latin translations. The manuscripts which coincide with those which have been brought direct from Constantinople, he distinguishes as the Byzantine.

1. The Alexandrian is found in the Vatican MS. for the Gospels, and in the Alexandrian for the other books. It coincides with the quotations not only of Origen, but of Clement, Cyril, and other authors of Alexandria, and is followed by the Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Syro-Philoxenian versions.

2. The Western, which agrees with the Vulgate, seldom varies from Beza's MS. in the Gospels; in the Acts and the Catholic Epistles it chiefly accords with the Alexandrian recension, and is cited by the African fathers, as Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine.

3. The Byzantine, which is found in the Gospels in the Alexandrian MS. and in the other books, in the Harleian MS. 5684, and the Moscow, Mt. V. is the Received Text. It is the original of the ancient Russian version, and is cited by the Gregories, Chrysostom, Theophylact, and most of the Greek fathers.

Each recension has its characteristics; the Western retains Hebraisms and solecisms, which the Alexandrian has exchanged for readings more classical, or calculated to relieve the text from difficulties. The Byzantine resembles it in this respect, and preserves the idiom still purer than the Alexandrian. The manuscripts of the Alexandrian and the Western editions are comparatively few, especially those of the second, having been generally superseded by the Byzantine.

Assuming this scheme of Griesbach, or any similar one, to be established, the evidence of manuscripts is not to be counted, but weighed. A hundred, that agree because they are all the transcripts of one original, will be regarded as

but a single witness; while the reading of a very few will be adopted, if these few be of two or three families. It is to the Alexandrian family that Griesbach ascribes the highest authority, and he endeavours to confirm it by the collateral testimony of the fathers and early versions. His theory, which is generally followed, has lowered the credit of the Received Text; but it has found defenders in Matthæi on the continent, and in our country in Dr. Nolan. Griesbach's object was to establish the Alexandrian text by the united testimony of Clement and Origen, and to strengthen it by an alliance with the Western, in order to form a counterpoise to the immense superiority in number of the Byzantine. According to Nolan, both the pillars on which this system rests are unsound. He argues, that as Origen settled early at Cæsarea in Palestine, his authority for an Alexandrian Text cannot be reasonably claimed, and that it is unsafe to appeal to any of the fathers, who generally quote from memory. He allows, that the uniformity of this class of manuscripts with both the Western and Eastern versions, has convinced many that they contain the genuine text. The force of the argument, however, he hopes to remove, by showing, that the Western had been corrected, first by Jerome, and afterwards by Cassiodorus, and that the general coincidence of the Eastern may be traced to the influence of an edition of the original, published by Eusebius at the command of Constantine. This position he endeavours to establish from the prevalence of the sections and canons of Eusebius, both in manuscripts and in these versions, and from the accordance of their texts with his opinions, by which are explained the two omissions in the gospels, (of Mark xvi. 9—20. and John viii. 1—11.) mentioned above, and the doctrinal peculiarity of remarkable readings. (Acts xx. 28. 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 John v. 7.) But though Nolan prefers the Byzantine or Received Text,

he agrees with Griesbach in reducing all manuscripts to three classes, only substituting Palestine for Alexandria, and Egyptian for Western. He conceives that these classes agree with the varieties of the Latin version: the Byzantine with it in its original state, which is called the Italic; the Western with it as revised by St. Eusebius of Vercelli, the friend of Athanasius, at the desire of the Pope; and the Alexandrian with it as again revised by Jerome. The first is contained in a MS. at Brescia, written in silver characters on purple vellum; the second, supposed to be in the handwriting of a later Eusebius, is deposited among the relics in his Church. Having shown the existence of these three classes from internal evidence, he endeavours to establish it by the authority of Jerome. "The world," says that father, "is divided into three parties, by three editions of the Greek Bible¹. The example of Origen had been followed by Lucian of Antioch, afterwards a martyr in the Diocletian persecution, and by Hesychius, an Egyptian Bishop; and while the original revision was preferred in Palestine, that of the former prevailed from Constantinople to Antioch, and that of the latter in Egypt." He is here only speaking of the Septuagint, but their revisals must have comprehended the New Testament; for he says in another place^m, that Pope Gelasius prohibited the Gospels, which Lucian and Hesychius had falsified, and that the western church remained stedfast to the established text. What share Origen had in correcting this, cannot now be ascertained; but the variety of readings in manuscripts of all ages, and the silence of ecclesiastical antiquity, sufficiently prove, that there never was any revision of the text approved and formally adopted by the whole church.

Dr. Nolan's scheme is only a modification of that of

¹ *Adversus Rufinum*.

^m *Prolog. in Nov. Test.*

Griesbach, but there are critics who reject it altogether; and it must at least be confessed, that it is less satisfactory upon examination than it appears to be when first stated; for no individual manuscript preserves any edition in a pure state, but it is assigned to that, the readings of which preponderate in it. It is material to observe also, that the three texts do not differ so much as the terms, families, recensions, editions, seem to imply. Still, whichever we prefer, or whatever mode of explaining the existence of various readings we adopt, the more the subject is investigated, the more reason we shall find to be satisfied, that though the literal identity of the received with the original text is abandoned by all, the doctrinal identity is established; and that even the most faulty manuscript extant, supposing all others to have perished, would not pervert one article of our faith, or affect one moral precept. In conclusion, I observe, that their general uniformity demonstrates both the veneration in which the Scriptures have been held, and the care that was taken in transcribing them, and affords us an additional and most convincing proof, that they exist at present, in all essential points, the same as when they came from the hands of their authors.

The consideration of manuscripts leads us to that of printed copies. It is natural to ask, what manuscript the first editors adopted; but the result of our enquiries is less satisfactory than is perhaps expected by those who have not studied the subject; as the answer must be, that they had not access to those now acknowledged to be the best, some of which have been brought to light since their time; that those they used were few, and comparatively modern, and that they do not always abstain from conjectural emendation. The primary editions are no more than three; the Complutensian, and those of Erasmus and Beza, from which all succeeding ones have been derived. The art of printing had been employed in giving circulation to the Latin Bible,

more than half a century before it was applied to the original text. Aldus had printed as an experiment, in 1504, the first six chapters of St. John's Gospel; but the honour of giving to the world the whole Testament in the language in which it was written was reserved for Erasmus, who published it at Basle in 1516. Some of the MSS. which he used are in the public library of that city, but none are of great antiquity: one of the fifteenth century is the basis of his edition of the Gospels; and he had only one imperfect one of the Apocalypse, the chasms in which he filled up with his own Greek translation from the Vulgate. The Greek Testament had been printed two years earlier as a volume of the first Polyglott Bible, which had been prepared under the patronage of Cardinal Ximenes at Alcalá, the ancient Complutum, from which it derives its appellation, which distinguishes it from the later ones of Paris and London. Leo X. did not permit it to be sold till 1522, by which time that of Erasmus had reached a third edition. The fourth, 1527, he corrected from it, particularly in the Apocalypse. The manuscripts from which the Complutensian text was formed have disappeared, but there is internal evidence for their being of recent date. Beza formed his first text, 1566, upon the third of Robert Stephens, 1550, which is little more than a reprint of the fifth of Erasmus, 1535; but that of 1565, is altered chiefly from his own celebrated MS. and that of Clermont, for St. Paul's Epistles; and the edition of 1598 is particularly interesting to us, as being that adopted as the basis of our authorized version. Upon Stephens's third edition, and the improved text of Beza, a new one was formed, it does not appear by whom, and published in 1624 by Elzevir, which has acquired the appellation of the Received Text, and is the one in universal use. Other editions are distinguished by their collections of various readings, but they retain his text. Curcellæus, the first editor of note of this description,

1658, was followed by Walton in the English Polyglott, and by Bishop Fell, 1675; but the celebrated edition of Mill, published at Oxford in 1707, the result of thirty years' labour, containing all the readings then known, formed an æra in biblical criticism. The edition of Wetstein, which appeared in 1751, is considered by Bishop Marsh as invaluable, and his enumeration of various readings far surpasses those of his predecessors. He collated many manuscripts for the first time, and recollated others, inspected the versions and the quotations by the fathers, and rendered the use of his readings more easy, by describing the character of the manuscripts he used. Matthæi published a New Testament at Riga, 1782, with readings exclusively from the Moscow manuscripts of the Byzantine family; and Birch, the Gospels at Copenhagen, 1788, with readings from the Escorial and Italian manuscripts, which had not been previously examined, and afterwards added the readings of the other books, 1798. But of all the critical editions, that of Griesbach, 1796, is universally allowed to be the most complete. His object was an arrangement of the readings which had been discovered up to his time; but as, from the number of his discriminating marks, it is difficult for one imperfectly acquainted with his work to ascertain their respective merits, Dr. White, 1811, has supplied us, in his *Criseos Griesbachiensis Synopsis*, with a convenient index to it.

The ancients had, prior to the fourth century, a double division of the New Testament, into longer and shorter sections, *τίτλοι* and *κεφαλαία*, in Latin *breves* and *capitula*. The latter, as observed above, are called the Ammonian or Eusebian sections. To show their difference it may be observed, that Matthew's Gospel contains 68 of the first, and 355 of the second, even the former being much shorter than our chapters, which were made for both Testaments by Cardinal Hugo de Sancta Clara, when he projected

a Concordance. This division is obviously capable of improvement. In the Gospels it is open to few serious objections; but in the Acts it makes us lose sight of the fact, that all St. Paul's Missionary journeys began and ended with Antioch; and in the Epistles they are generally too short, and often injuriously break the connection. Thus, in those to Ephesus and Colossé, they strangely sever relative duties, and frequently, as Romans iv. v. vii. viii. and John i. ii. break the chain of reasoning. The Cardinal subdivided them into smaller portions by the first seven letters of the alphabet, which he placed at equal distances in the margin; but this division has been superseded by that into verses, which, for the New, was invented by Robert Stephens, and first introduced into his edition of 1551. The Geneva English Testament, printed in that city, 1557, is the first of the translations into our language in which it is used.

The punctuation seems to have been commenced by Jerome, who introduced the comma and the colon. The note of interrogation was not used till the ninth century. The editors of printed editions have placed the points arbitrarily; and Stephens varied his in every edition. As they form no part of the original, we are of course entitled to alter them according to our judgment. I mention as an instance, that not only Augustine^a, but all the Greek fathers, from Irenæus^o to Chrysostom, marked the third and fourth verses of the first chapter of John's Gospel in the following manner: *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made. That which was made in him was life*: and Origen argues from this arrangement of the passage^p. The present punctuation was introduced by Chrysostom, and will be generally approved, though the former one is preferred by some modern critics.

^a in Joann.

^o i. 22. ii. iii. 8. 11.

^p Comm. on the verse.

SECTION V.

The Language.

HAVING shown that the authenticity of the New Testament may be established by the strongest evidence, and that the text, as handed down to us, is sufficiently correct to make us, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, *wise unto salvation*, we have next to examine the language in which it is written. That language, it is well known, is Greek; but it is of a peculiar character, as all who are conversant with the classical authors will allow; and to distinguish it from the idioms in which they wrote, it has been termed Hellenistic. It is not a distinct dialect, because it does not differ in grammar, that is, in the inflexion of nouns and verbs, but in syntax, being the same difference as that which exists between the English composition of a native and of a foreigner, who, though he respects grammatical rules, thinks in his own language what he afterwards writes down in the other. Thus in the New Testament, the words are Greek, but the phrases are Hebrew. When the Apostles went beyond the Holy Land, it was necessary that they should make use of another tongue, their own being confined to Syria; and Greek, which was then spoken over the Roman empire, as French in modern Europe, had many advantages over Latin, especially to those whose missions were chiefly to the eastern provinces. Cicero (*pro Archia*) had confessed even when Rome was at the height of glory, that Latin was confined to its own narrow limits, while almost all nations read Greek. That language therefore was naturally preferred as the vehicle of a revelation, alike designed for Gentile and Jew. The persecution of the latter under Antiochus Epiphanes, the encouragement held out to them by the Ptolemies kings of Egypt, and other concurring causes, had occasioned a considerable dispersion of the nation, not only in Asia and

Africa, but even in Achaia and Italy, as appears from their historian Josephus, from the Acts of the Apostles, and from Roman authors. The gradual substitution of Greek for their own tongue naturally followed among these colonists; and this was much promoted by the translation of their Scriptures into the Alexandrian dialect, which, being used in their synagogues, soon became the standard of their language. Hence a certain uniformity of idiom prevailed among Jews speaking Greek, wherever dispersed. We find the distinction between them and their countrymen at home marked in the Acts of the Apostles, in which we read, that there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected; and they are described by a peculiar word, Ἑλληνισταὶ^a, Hellenizing or Grecianizing, the real Greeks being called Ἕλληνες, Hellenes.

As this version is so often quoted in the New Testament, and has contributed so largely to form the style in which it is written, it may be desirable to introduce a brief account of its origin and character. It is called the Septuagint, as the reputed work of seventy-two translators, sent for the purpose by the high priest at the desire of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, who wished to deposit a copy of the Scriptures in the library which he was then founding at Alexandria. This statement is contained in a letter ascribed to Aristeas, one of the two officers of his court, deputed with this object to Jerusalem. It was believed by Josephus, Philo, and Justin Martyr, who repeat it with minute and marvellous additions, such as that all translated apart, and that on comparison their versions were found to be precisely the same. But the whole story is now justly discredited by most who have examined it; and it is the

^a In like manner Diodorus Siculus, and other historians, distinguish the Greek settlers in Italy from the natives, Ἴταλοι, by the similar word Ἰταλιῶται, and those in Sicily from the Sicilians, calling the former Σικελιῶται, the latter Σικελοί.

received opinion, that the Pentateuch was translated by the Jews of Alexandria, for the purpose of being read in the Synagogue, and that the version is called the Septuagint, not from the number of the translators, but from that of the members of the Sanhedrim that authorized its use. Still, as no such sanction is recorded, the name might be derived from the popular story, which was believed till modern times. The other books followed at different periods; and the diversity of style and the inequality of execution prove that they were not translated by the same persons. The Pentateuch and Proverbs are most approved: the Psalms and Prophets, especially Isaiah, were executed by those who were unequal to the undertaking^b; and the version of Daniel was so full of errors, that it was rejected by the Church for that of Theodotion. The critical importance of the Septuagint is variously estimated, and difficult to ascertain. It often differs from the original, and in many passages so materially, that it cannot be regarded as a translation of the Received Text. That text, however, we know was revised some centuries after the Christian æra; and we have no means of determining the merits of the MSS. from which it was corrected. But whatever change might then have been introduced, it will not explain all its differences, as many of them existed when Origen undertook to bring the text nearer to the Hebrew. It represents the Samaritan Pentateuch more closely than the Hebrew, and, like the former, greatly lengthens the chronology, which is accomplished in such a manner as shows that there must have been an intentional alteration, either in the original, or in the version.

^b Ἰωσεδέκ ἐν τοῖς προφήταις, Jeremiah xxiii. 6. is a remarkable instance, which is left as a proper name untranslated, and which it requires some knowledge of Hebrew to discover, means, *The Lord our Righteousness*, a defect greatly to be regretted, since it deprives the reader of the Prophet's attestation to two leading tenets of Christianity.

It seems to be certain, that it must have been translated from MSS. without the vowel points; but this will not account for all its various readings, which often require a change also of consonants. The epistle to the Hebrews exhibits a remarkable specimen of both. Jacob (xi. 21.) worshipped, leaning on the *top of his staff*, for *bed's head*; and, (x. 5.) *a body thou hast prepared me*, for *mine ears thou hast opened*, the first produced by a change of vowels, but the latter requiring a substitution of other words. The authority of an inspired Apostle would be, of course, decisive; but it may be urged, that he cited the text as he found it, because sufficiently accurate for his purpose; and at the utmost it is only a few passages that can thus be restored on authority.

It is also difficult to discover in what edition we shall find the real Septuagint; for so greatly do the celebrated Alexandrian and Vatican MSS. vary, that it is conjectured that the former represents the text as Origen revised it, and the latter as he found it. Probably the most remarkable variation is, in the titles assigned by Isaiah ix. 6. to the child that unto us is born, which are all translated in the Alexandrian MS. but in the Vatican are compressed into *μεγάλης βουλῆς ἄγγελος*, messenger of the great covenant. His attempt to correct the text has increased our perplexity. He collated all the MSS. he could procure; and devoted twenty-eight years to his great work, which he called Hexapla, because he arranged it in six columns, exhibiting the Hebrew text, first in its own, and then in Greek characters, the Septuagint, and the three other versions of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus; the first two made in the second century, the last probably in the third. His object was not, as might have been wished, the restoration, but the improvement, of the version, by rendering it more conformable to the original. He informs us, that he marked with a spit, *ὀβελός*, what was not in the Hebrew, but in the

Septuagint; and with an asterisk what was not in the Septuagint, but in the Hebrew, and supplied it from the other translations, chiefly that of Theodotion. The work itself exists only in a few fragments, but his text became the received Bible. As such it was continually copied; but in the course of time his marks were so often omitted or misplaced, that his object was in a great degree frustrated; and though Eusebius, about A.D. 300, reedited it from the original, then extant at Cæsarea, it must soon have been again corrupted; for Jerome complains that the Septuagint could not be found as originally translated. A short time before, Lucian of Antioch and Hesychius of Alexandria corrected the original Septuagint from the Hebrew, and while Origen's text was read in Palestine, the use of the former prevailed in Syria, and that of the latter in Egypt; so that, according to Jerome, the world was divided between the three. To these Recensions and the original Septuagint we may refer the extant MSS. and the principal editions. That of the Complutensian and Antwerp Polyglotts, 1515 and 1571, is supposed to represent the Hexaplar text; the Aldine, 1518, comes nearer to the original Septuagint; and the Roman, 1587, from the Vatican MS., still closer. The Alexandrian MS. was published by Grabe at London, 1707; but all are superseded by the critical edition at the Press of the University of Oxford, undertaken by Dr. Holmes, and completed by Mr. Parsons, in which we have a complete collection of various readings, not only from MSS. and versions, but also from the quotations in the writings of the fathers.

There is a serious defect in this version, not arising from ignorance, but superstition. It is well known, that the modern Jews never presume to pronounce the name which the Deity has appropriated to himself, but always substitute Lord for Jehovah. This superstition unhappily prevailed at the time of the translation of the Septuagint, for like

our Lord their *Kύριος* is ambiguous, and may be used with propriety of the Lord of all, and of any human being who is, or is considered in courtesy by the speaker as his superior. From the Septuagint, *Kύριος* was transferred to the New Testament; which is the more to be regretted, because though in the quotations from the Prophets it is easy to restore the name of Jehovah when it is applied to Jesus, there are original passages, in which we may reasonably suppose, (though in consequence of this we cannot prove,) that divinity is predicated of the Saviour. Happily, however, the declarations to that effect are so numerous and so diversified, that more are not needed by any careful enquirer, though they may be overlooked by the hasty reader. Upon the whole, whatever may be the defects or imperfections of the Septuagint, though it can no longer claim to be inspired, still we have reason to be thankful for it, and may observe that with all its variations and imperfections, a version previous to the Christian æra, which only occasionally differs from the Hebrew, and exhibits the same leading prophecies of the Messiah as the original before his advent, is the strongest guarantee that the Jews, to whom *were committed the oracles of God*^c, were faithful to their trust. Luther and our translators in like manner render Jehovah, Lord, except in a very few instances, though ours have endeavoured to obviate the obscurity it occasions, by printing it in capitals when it stands for that sacred title; as, *the LORD [Jehovah] said unto my lord [Adoni]*^d.

Having superseded the original in the synagogues of the foreign Jews, it is cited both by Philo and Josephus; and as none of the fathers, except Origen and Jerome, were acquainted with Hebrew, it became the Bible of the Church. Such it still remains in the East, though of course now only intelligible to the very few who have learnt the ancient tongue; while in the West the original took its place in the

^c Romans iii. 1.

^d Psalm cx. 1.

translation of St. Jerome, called the Vulgate. Its adoption by the Church ruined its reputation with the Jews, who substituted for it the more literal version of Aquila, A.D. 430, a proselyte from Christianity, and are said to have instituted a yearly fast, in order to curse this translation, in honour of which their ancestors in the time of Philo were accustomed to keep a feast. It was familiar to the writers of the New Testament, and to those of Jewish origin whom they addressed; and as they wrote in Greek, it was natural that they should make use of this translation, which was then probably regarded much in the same light as the authorized version is with us; but they did not adhere to it without exception. The subject has been fully examined, both by our own and foreign critics; and the result has been exhibited by Horne, who, after transcribing all the quotations in the New Testament from the Old, thus sums it up. "As their quotations now correspond with the Hebrew very frequently in express words, and generally in the sense, so it is highly probable that they uniformly agreed at first; and that where the Hebrew was properly expressed in the Greek version, they used the words of that version; but where it materially varied, they either gave the sense of the passage cited in their own words, or took as much of the Septuagint as suited their purpose, introducing the requisite alterations. Hence several passages are direct quotations from neither. All this accords with what ordinary writers in similar circumstances would have done; but the sacred penmen, being themselves inspired, might take liberties which we must not, because their comments are equally the word of God with the text commented on."

It is clear from this statement, that the theologian ought to be well acquainted with the Septuagint; but the influence it has had on the style of the New Testament supplies a still more forcible argument for the study of it. This Hellenistic Greek, in which both are

written, not only, as has been observed, conveys Hebrew phrases in Greek words, but uses single words in senses unknown to classical writers^c. This difference in idiom constitutes a difficulty much harder to be surmounted than that of dialect, as it affects not the form but the meaning of words^d. Blackwall, and others, have laboured to

^c For example, we should turn in vain over the classics, or recur to the roots *ἄγιος* and *δικη*, to ascertain the full import of *ἀγιασμός* and *δικαιοσύνη*, which can only be learnt by examining the Hebrew *Kadesh* and *Tzadak*, which they represent in the Septuagint. Thus also *ταπεινοφροσύνη*, which is a vice in the classics, becomes in the New Testament a virtue; nor can it be justly affirmed, as it is by some, that the word expresses the same disposition of mind, and that the difference is in the judgment formed concerning it; for it is comprised under *μικροψυχία*, *pusillanimity*, by Aristotle, *Περὶ ἀρετῶν καὶ κακίων*, and contrasted with *μεγαλοψυχία*, *magnanimity*; and to evince that the corresponding Latin term *humilitas*, in heathen authors, has the same meaning, we have the authority of Cicero. “*Succumbere doloribus eosque humili animo imbecilloque ferre miserum est.*” *De Finibus*, l. to which he opposes, “*Robustus animus et excelsus, liber cura et angore.*” In conformity, however, with the style of the Italic translation, this word has been made the sign of the Christian virtue, humility, which Castalio, careful of the purity of his Latinity in his version of the Bible, always renders by *modestia*. To those who would enter more fully into the subject, I recommend the chapter on the Septuagint in Ernesti’s *Institutes*, from which I extract the following observations. Whatever Greek word corresponded etymologically to a Hebrew word, or expressed its primary signification, was employed by the translators also for all the tropical significations, and that in a way irreconcilable with the usages of Greek. Thus *ῥῆμα* is made to represent *Dabar* in its double sense of *word* and *thing*. Secondly, when Hebrew words have many different meanings which cannot well be explained by tropical transference, nor derived from the primary signification, the corresponding Greek words are used with the same latitude; thus as *Nathan* is either *to give* or *to place*, *τίθεναι* and *δίδοναι* are used indifferently to convey the same idea. John x. 11, 17.

^d The Hebraisms of the New Testament are numerous. I will

vindicate the purity of the New Testament Greek^e. Their industry has been partially successful, for, after a laborious investigation, solecisms have been explained away, by the production of similar phrases in the most approved classical authors. Yet upon the whole the truth of the remark remains unimpaired, for the general homeliness of the diction has been owned both by Origen and by Chrysostom, who were far more competent judges of such a question than any modern can be, since not only was Greek their native tongue, but they were famous for eloquence, especially the latter, who has been called the Christian Demosthenes, and is indebted to it for his surname Golden-mouthed, which has nearly superseded his real name John. The latter says, "Lest we should make ourselves ridiculous arguing thus with Grecians, for our dispute is with them, let us accuse the Apostles of being illiterate, for this accusation is an encomium^f." And the former goes still farther, "The Apostles, not ignorant of their defects, profess themselves to be of the vulgar in speech, but not in knowledge^g." Still the New Testament contains fewer Hebrew grammatical constructions than the Septuagint, except in the book of Revelation, and a large proportion of the phrases and constructions is Greek, of the same degree of purity as that spoken in Macedonia, in which Polybius wrote his history. Many authors, who have devoted their time to the study of Greek, have collected from the classics all the expressions,

mention two which are continually recurring. Adjectives in Hebrew are few, and for them two nouns, nominatives or a nominative with a genitive, are substituted. As grace and truth, for the true grace, (John i.); Lord of glory, for glorious lord; and bond of perfectness, for a perfect bond. All the former are, I believe, retained in our version, but the latter are generally rendered according to the English idiom; as unrighteous steward, instead of steward of unrighteousness.

^e The Sacred Classics defended and illustrated.

^f Hom. iii. in 1 Cor. i.

^g Philocalia iv.

that can in any way illustrate the style of the New Testament, and Lexicons have been drawn up for the same purpose, none of which can be compared with that of Schleusner, who has arranged in alphabetical order the most important remarks of preceding critics. It is to be feared, however, that, like many German theologians, he did not believe in all the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, and therefore his own explanations of the words that bear upon them must be read with caution^h.

Ciceroⁱ informs us, that the Greek philosophers imagined, that if Jupiter were to speak Greek, it would be in the language of Plato. If any enquire, why, on the contrary, the true God chose to communicate His will in an idiom which they would have despised as barbarous; we reply, that the New Testament was written not to excite the admiration of the few, but the edification of the many, and that this idiom would be far more generally understood, and especially by the Jews, to whom the gospel was first preached. Hence too the important conclusion follows, that the conviction which was the consequence of divine truth, could not be attributed to human eloquence. And this very fact, which to critics of fastidious taste has been a stumbling-block, is an intrinsic and irresistible evidence of the authenticity of the New Testament, since it is such in respect of style as could only have been written by Jews, and hardly even by Jews, such as Philo and Josephus, superior in rank and education to the disciples of our Lord. It may be added, (which greatly strengthens this argument,) that we find under this homely garb, the most exalted sentiments, the most convincing reasoning, the purest morality, and the sublimest doctrines, far beyond their own powers of mind to originate.

^h Examples of this are given by Bishop Jebb, in his *Sacred Literature*.

ⁱ *De Claris Oratoribus*, 31.

Still homeliness may be overstated; for the language, though inelegant in the estimation of a Greek, is not a jargon, like the *lingua franca*, formed by persons who, speaking different tongues, borrow words from all, throwing off grammatical inflections, but has rules of its own; and St. Paul's Epistles abundantly show, that this dialect is as capable as that of Demosthenes of being rendered eloquent, in the estimation of those who value thoughts more than the words in which they are clothed. The remark too must be limited to our Lord's followers; for we should recollect, that his discourses are translated into it, and that he spoke in Syriac, in which we have no reason to conclude that he expressed himself less elegantly than other teachers. There is no intimation of the imperfection of them as uttered even in this subordinate point; and as it is said, that *never man spake like this man*^k; and that the people wondered at *his gracious words*^l; though the Evangelists had chiefly in view the matter, we need not altogether exclude from their consideration the manner. And certainly in their literal translations we have the thoughts that breathe conveyed in unidiomatic, and what Greeks might term barbarous, phrases. Allowing that we have not our Lord's actual words, we may maintain that his parables and allegories are inimitable in substance; that his figures are most appropriate; and that the style is throughout poetical. Nor should this, which has been always more or less characteristic of oriental teachers, surprise us, when we recollect, that the sublime and pathetic diction of the Psalmist and the Prophets had been the study of his youth, and that when he came to express his own thoughts in words, they would, as it were unconsciously, assume a similar arrangement. It is easy to trace in his speeches a strong resemblance to their writings, not only in express images and expressions, but in the very structure of the

^k John vii. 45.

^l Luke iv. 22.

composition. Since the time of Bishop Lowth, the poetical portions of the Old Testament have been often printed as such, but it was reserved for Bishop Jebb to extend it to the New. His theory is, I conceive, substantially correct; and I only wonder that he had not been anticipated by Lowth, because the hymns recorded by St. Luke are plainly written in the same style as the poetry of the Old Testament, and the same system is exhibited in the intermediate Apocryphal books. It was therefore but a single step to extend it to the writings of the Apostles, and the discourses of our Lord: nor is it a sufficient objection, that portions of the latter are clearly prose; for the same may be proved of the ancient Prophets. If the poetic character does not so uniformly pervade them, though I do not know that this can be shown, it is no more than might be expected; for the Prophecies and Psalms are studied compositions, our Lord's speeches unpremeditated, and recorded not in the tongue in which they were spoken.

The theory when first mentioned is startling, but the reader's surprise will cease when he considers, that Hebrew versification is not marked by rhyme or by quantity, and does not even resemble blank verse, but that its sole characteristic is *parallelism*, that is, the repetition of an idea, reflected as it were back again in other terms; as

Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found,

Call ye upon him while he is near^m.

Or, to take an example from the New Testament,

My soul doth magnify the Lord,

And my spirit hath exulted in God my Saviourⁿ.

Occasionally the idea, instead of being repeated, is contrasted with its contrary, as frequently in the Proverbs: thus,

A wise son maketh a glad father,

But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother^o.

A version so literal as our own sufficiently exhibits the

^m Isaiah iv. 6.

ⁿ Luke i. 46.

^o Prov. x. 1.

system, but had our translators perceived this characteristic, they might by a more careful choice of words have rendered it more complete.

Parallelisms admit of much variety. The most frequent form, like the specimens I have cited, is confined to a couplet; sometimes it extends to four, six, and even more lines; it is often alternate, occasionally introverted; but under every combination gives energy and precision to the meaning. In the following it is enlarged to four;

*The ox knoweth his owner,
And the ass his master's crib :
But Israel doth not know,
My people doth not consider^p.*

In another to six :

*When it is evening you say, a calm,
For the sky is red.
And in the morning, to-day a tempest,
For the sky is red and lowering.
Hypocrites ! the face of the sky ye know,
But ye cannot discern the signs of the times^q.*

There are also parallelisms of three and five, but there being of necessity one independent line, they are less striking.

*To the way of the Gentiles go not off,
And to a city of the Samaritans go not in :*

But proceed rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel^r.

These parallellisms are regular, but the following are introverted. The first, condemning two acts of imprudence, in which the act dangerous to the individual is placed first and last, while that affecting only the truth itself is contained within the two intermediate lines.

*Give not that which is holy to the dogs,
Neither cast your pearls before the swine,
Lest they trample them under their feet,
And [these] turn about and rend you^s.*

^p Isaiah i. 3.

^q Matt. xvi. 2.

^r Matt. x. 5.

^s Matt. vii. 6.

And the second, which is more complicated, as the first and last lines, the second and fifth, and the third and fourth, respectively accord.

*And it shall come to pass in that day,
The great trumpet shall be blown,
And they shall come who were ready to perish in the land
of Assyria,
And the outcasts in the land of Egypt,
And shall worship Jehovah
In the holy mount at Jerusalem[†].*

The comparison of the two houses built on the sand and on the rock, with which the Sermon on the mount closes, consists of no less than sixteen^u.

The system is most fully developed in the Psalms, some of which, as the cv, cvi, and the cxiv, it is no exaggeration to say, would be intelligible, though we omitted the second clause of each verse; as cxiv.

*Judah was his sanctuary,
Israel his dominion.
The mountains skipped like rams,
The little hills like young sheep.
Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord,
At the presence of the God of Jacob, &c.*

This peculiarity must have been promoted by the practice of alternate singing; but it seems to have been coeval with the Hebrew tongue, as it prevails in the earliest specimens of its poetry, as Jacob's blessing, and Balaam's prophecy, and may be traced even beyond the Flood to Lamech's short speech to his wives^x.

So congenial is this parallelism to the Hebrew mind, that it even shows itself, independently of poetry, in passages

[†] Is. xxvii. 13.

^u Matt. vii. 25. Ps. cxiv.

^x I refer the reader, who is not satisfied with this specimen, to Lowth's Isaiah, and Lectures on Hebrew Poetry, and Bishop Jebb's Sacred Literature.

which are evidently prose. Thus St. John, who retains more of the peculiarities of his nation than the other writers of the New Testament, strengthens whatever he affirms by denying the contrary; as, *he confessed, and denied not^y*; and, *he that heareth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us^z*. And our Lord often renders his meaning more emphatic, by giving two examples instead of one. For instance^a, contrasting the future state of a Jewish town, in which he had worked miracles, with a heathen one of ancient days, he not only opposes Chorazin to Tyre, but also Bethsaida to Sidon. He declares himself at the same time to be greater than Jonah and Solomon^b. He connects Pilate's slaughter of the Galileans, whose blood he intentionally mingled with their sacrifices, with the accidental fall of the tower of Siloam upon others^c; and in the same discourse^d, refers to the cure of Naaman the Syrian, and to the relief of the widow of Sarepta.

SECTION VI.

The Ancient Versions and the English Translations.

THE New Testament has been translated into the language of almost every nation that has been converted to Christianity. The ancient versions, especially the Syriac and the Latin, have a critical value, since they give us the sense of doubtful words, which we may presume prevailed while Greek was a living tongue; and being literally rendered from manuscripts of higher antiquity than any extant, they supply us with various readings, which are in some instances preferred to those of the present text. The first, which was made pro-

^y John i. 20.

^z 1 John iv. 6.

^a Matt. xi. 21.

^b Matt. xii. 40, 41.

^c Luke xiii. 4.

^d Luke iv. 27.

bably in the second century, is peculiarly interesting, since it is in the language spoken by our Lord, and therefore probably represents his words even more accurately than the original; and the second, called the Vulgate, because generally received, deserves our study, as its author St. Jerome carefully collated whatever Greek manuscripts were accessible to him, and it dates from the beginning of the fifth century. As its adoption by the Church was voluntary and gradual, and as the Italic, that is, the old Latin translation, continued long in use in many places, there is reason to believe that the two have been sometimes blended together; for we find in the present Vulgate phrases which its author expressly condemns, so that the style is not uniform. We must also remember, that fear of shocking prejudices prevented his introducing every improvement that he wished. The sense in many places is conveyed justly and perspicuously; in others we find barbarisms and solecisms, occasioned, probably, by a preference of the language of the people to that of books. Thus the Greek *ὅτι*, which answers both to *quod* and *quia*, is almost always rendered by the latter, in defiance of sense and grammar; as thus, “Tunc confitebor illis *quia* nunquam novi vos;” and we may suppose that *quia* was then equivalent to *quod* in the ordinary speech, as *that* is to *because* in Scotland. It may be pronounced to be upon the whole a faithful version, which though not to be implicitly followed, is of great service to the critic; and being long anterior to the existing denominations of Christians, it has no bias in favour of any. Protestants are apt to be prejudiced against it, because it was declared to be authentic by the Council of Trent; but the real reason of the decision was, that the members of that Council knew that their opponents were preparing versions from the original, with which scarcely any of them were acquainted, and fearing that they might weaken the cause of Rome, interposed their authority in favour of the Bible

already in use. Passages^a from it certainly are adduced, favourable to the abuses which had crept into the Church, but there is no reason to suppose that they were so translated with any sinister design. The Douay Bible and the Rheims English Testament, published in opposition to the versions of the English Church, and other translations by Roman Catholics into their vernacular tongues, are from this text, which in consequence of the Trent decree has with them taken the place of the original. Being in constant use during the middle ages, it has contributed to form the theological language of Europe, and has had an influence upon our own authorized version, particularly in what are called consecrated terms, familiarised by use, which King James instructed his translators to retain. From the same causes that affected the original, the Vulgate version in the lapse of ages was corrupted through the carelessness of tran-

^a As the Angel's salutation to the Virgin, erroneously rendered, instead of *highly favoured, full of grace* (plena gratiæ); and the prediction, "*She* (ipsa) shall bruise thy head;" (Luke i. 28. Gen. iii. 15.) both of which afford some colour to the excessive and idolatrous honour paid to her by Roman Catholics; while the latter explains why painters have represented her trampling upon a serpent. Their best critics, however, consider (ipsa) *she* as the mistake of a transcriber, and refer to ancient manuscripts, which read *it* (ipsum). "Jacobus adoravit fastigium virgæ ejus," (Heb. xi. 21.) is quoted in support of the adoration of relics; προσεκύνησεν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ, "*worshipped leaning upon the top of his staff;*" a deviation from the original, that can only be explained by supposing that in the Latin MSS. the preposition was accidentally dropped. It renders μυστήριον, *sacramentum*, (Eph. v. 32.) and thereby has tended to exalt matrimony into a sacrament; but it appears from ecclesiastical writers, and other parts of this version, that this word was used for the moral or hidden meaning of an apologue; thus, (Rev. xvii. 7.) "Ego dicam tibi sacramentum mulieris." The same justification may be urged for "pœnitentiam agere," which, though translated *do penance*, in the Rhemish Testament, meant originally to *repent*.

scribers; and notwithstanding the attempt of Alcuin, under the authority of Charlemagne, to restore it to its integrity, great variations continued to prevail. When therefore the Council of Trent declared it to be authentic, it became necessary that this standard of appeal should be corrected; and accordingly an edition of authority was issued from the Roman press, by the celebrated Sixtus the Fifth, A.D. 1590, who is said to have himself revised the proofs. Notwithstanding, it was soon ascertained to be so inaccurate, that it was suppressed by his successor Clement VIII. who published, 1592, another edition, which is the present Roman Catholic Bible.

In modern times several Latin translations have been made both by Roman Catholics and Protestants, of which I think it worth while to name only that of the celebrated Beza, which has been made the standard of most of the vernacular versions used by the reformed Church, and has occasionally perverted certain doctrinal texts in our own. "It requires," says Campbell, "but very little of a critical eye to discover in him a constant and indeed an avowed effort to accommodate the language to his own theological views ^b."

^b We have a remarkable instance in Acts xiv. 23. bearing upon Church government; *Χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς πρεσβυτέρους*: "Quumque ipsi per *suffragia* creassent presbyteros;" which the Vulgate renders rightly *constituissent*. Beza has been followed in this by the French Diodati, and by the Geneva English, but not by the authors of our version. They have, however, rendered with him, *ἐπρέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις*, in the sermon on the mount, *by* instead of *to* the ancients; in which he is followed by almost all Protestant translators, though he confesses the other rendering to be more faithful; and they have translated after him, in a sense more favourable to final perseverance than the original, Heb. x. 38. *Ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται καὶ ἐὰν ὑποστειλῇται*: "The just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back:" although it is rightly rendered *he* in the earlier translations. He even renders *πάντας, quosvis*, instead of

Wycliffe, the morning-star of the Reformation, as he has been called, prepared the way for that blessed event, not only by numerous tracts, but also by a translation of the whole Bible, which its editors think he undertook late in life, yet was enabled with the assistance of his followers to complete. Being from the Vulgate, it is chiefly interesting to us as a specimen of our language, in its transition from Saxon to English; and was published for the first time in 1850, by the University of Oxford, to whom not only the literary world, but the universal Church, is indebted for the elaborate editions of the original Scriptures by Kennicott, and the Greek version of them by Holmes; while in a former age, the New Testaments of Fell and Mill issued from its press. This Bible exhibits two translations, the first of which the editors ascribe to Wycliffe, and the second, a revision of the former to Purvey, the leader of the Lollards, after his decease. Wycliffe's New Testament has hitherto been supposed to have been published by Lewis in 1721, and this was reprinted by Baber in 1810; but it now appears that this was not his, but the revised version. In France, a translation of the Bible had been completed even earlier, which was afterwards printed by command of Charles VIII. A.D. 1487; and there were not long after Italian and Spanish versions, but all these were, like Wycliffe's, rendered from the Vulgate. For Luther was reserved the honour of first reproducing the holy Scriptures from the original tongues; and his work was carefully revised by Melancthon, and other of his associates, who were eminent for learning as well as for piety and zeal in the cause of

omnes, ὅς πάντας ἀνθρώπους θέλει σωθῆναι, (1 Tim. ii. 4.) that he may do away the testimony of this text in favour of universal redemption: but in this our translators do not follow him. In candour it ought to be added, that for such variations he assigns his reasons in the notes, and as it is accompanied with the Vulgate and the Greek text, no reader can be misled.

the Reformation. Our own Tyndale had retired to Antwerp, to translate the Testament from the Greek, and his work was printed only four years after that of Luther. He had the cooperation of John Fryth and William Roye a friar, names little known on earth, who all suffered for what was called heresy, the first in Smithfield, the second in Portugal, while Tyndale himself was put to death at Vilworde, near Antwerp, through the influence of Henry VIII. with the Emperor. His Testament still lives, for it is the basis of our authorized version; and his dying prayer, "Open, O Lord, the king of England's eyes," was heard as far as it respected this country^c. Seven editions of it appeared, but all abroad, before his martyrdom, 1536. In the opinion of Dr. Geddes, few first translations are preferable; and he observes, that it has not been surpassed in perspicuity and purity of style by any subsequent version. Tyndale also published the Pentateuch 1530, and Jonah 1531, and translated other books of the Old Testament; but Bishop Coverdale was the first who

^c The following chronological list of translators may be found useful.

Erasmus, 1516. His version varies little from the Vulgate.
Luther, 1552.

Lefebvre's French Testament, 1523.

Tyndale's English Testament, 1526.

Coverdale's English Bible, and Olivetan's French, 1535.

Cranmer's Bible, 1539.

Castalio's Latin Bible, 1551.

Geneva English Testament, 1557.

——— Bible, 1560.

Beza's Latin Testament, 1560.

The Bishops' Bible, 1568.

Junius and Tremellius Latin Bible, 1575.

Rheims Testament, 1582.

Diodati's Italian Bible, 1607.

The Douay Bible, 1609—1610.

The Authorized Version, 1611.

edited the whole English Bible, in 1535; and in 1539, was published under Cranmer's patronage, what is commonly called the Great Bible, which appears to have been a revision of this. Several of our reformers, who had been driven from England by Mary's persecution, published an English Testament at Geneva, 1557, and completed the Bible in 1560. After the accession of Elizabeth, the new Archbishop Parker proposed another translation, which was published in 1568. Portions, at least fifteen in number, were allotted to men of competent ability, and as eight of these were bishops, it is known by their name. This translation, which is the one quoted in the Homilies, was used in church for forty years, though the Geneva version, on account of the notes, was more read in private. In 1582, the Roman Catholics, finding it impossible to withhold the Scriptures any longer from the people, printed their Testament at Rheims. Objections having been made to the Bishops' Bible at the Hampton Court Conference, A.D. 1604, James I. gave orders for a new version. It was consigned to fifty-four persons; but some of these must have died, or declined to act, for the list, as given in Fuller's Church History, comprises only forty-seven. They were divided into six classes. Ten were to meet at Westminster, and translate from Genesis to the second Book of Kings inclusive; eight at Cambridge undertook the other Historical Books and the Hagiographa; seven at Oxford were to translate the Prophets; the Gospels, Acts, and Apocalypse were assigned to another company at Oxford of eight; the Epistles were translated at Westminster by seven, and the Apocrypha at Cambridge. Properly speaking, it is not a new translation, but a revision; and in limiting themselves to this office, these divines were faithful to their commission, for they were instructed to alter the Bishops' Bible as little as the original would permit, and to use Tyndale's and the other translations when they agreed better with it. It was another instruction, occasioned it is

said by the king's dislike of the Geneva annotations, that none should be affixed to this. The importance of this instruction could not be fully appreciated at the time, but in our day we find in it abundant cause of gratitude to him, whose Providence "disposeth as it seemeth best to his godly wisdom the hearts of kings," that the authorized version of the Church of England was unaccompanied with note or comment. Not that I mean to underrate the value of such aids to the understanding of the sacred text, and happily they abound in our language; but now we judge of their merit, instead of surrendering our judgment to them; whereas if the best that could have been drawn up had been imposed as Articles of Faith, time would have detected in them errors, and we should have been placed in the painful dilemma of sacrificing our conviction of truth, or of opposing the authority of the Church. This great work was begun in 1607, and completed in 1611. After this publication, the former versions fell gradually into disuse; only the Psalms and the Canticles from Cranmer's Bible, 1539, are still retained in our book of Common Prayer. There was no less an interval than eighty-five years between Tyndale's first edition and the publication of King James's Bible. Exclusive of independent attempts, there have been three authorized revisions rather than translations, for Tyndale's text may be traced throughout them all, as any one may satisfy himself who will undertake to compare them^d.

No translation bears a higher character than our own; but though substantially accurate, it must, as uninspired, have its faults. Its actual mistakes are few, but in many instances the full energy of an expression, and the precise shade of meaning, have not been conveyed. These cannot

^d Dr. Cotton, in the Appendix to his List of Editions of the Bible, has given specimens of these translations of Mark xiv. 1—5. and 1 Cor. xv. 29—46. and Bagster has brought them all together into a single volume, under the title of the English Hexapla.

always be transfused into a version: but the imperfect knowledge of the translator is occasionally the cause, for the two centuries which have since passed have contributed much to a more critical understanding of the original tongue. These blemishes are not often in essential points, still they injure the effect; and Campbell has happily transferred to such corrections as modern criticism supplies, Spence's remarks upon the utility of his inquiries into the remains of ancient art for throwing light upon the classics. "The chief use I have found in this sort of study, has not been so much in discovering what was wholly unknown, as in strengthening and beautifying what was known before. When the day was so much overcast just now, you saw all the same objects that you do at present; these trees, that river, the forest on the left hand, and those spreading vales to the right; but now the sun is broke out, you see all of them more clearly, and with more pleasure. It shows scarce any thing you did not see before, but it gives new life and lustre to every thing you did see^e."

The fluctuations to which Language is liable, has rendered our version, in certain passages^f, unintelligible to the un-

^e Polymetis, Dialogue vi.

^f Archbishop Newcome has entered fully into the subject in his *Historical View of English Biblical Translations*, Dublin, 1792. The following words may serve as specimens of the obsolete: "leasing," for *lies*; "daysman," for *umpire*; "carriage," for *baggage*; (Acts xxi. 15. 1 Sam. xvii. 22.) "oweth," for *owneth*; "to eschew," for to *avoid*. Thus, "Take no thought," (μεριμνάω,) means now, *be not anxious*. Ἀναστροφὴ, *conversation*, which we limit to discourse, originally included conduct. And this change of meaning has enfeebled several passages, as this, *they falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ*, (1 Pet. iii. 16.) and rendered Paul's exhortation to Timothy, *Be an example in word and in conversation*, (1 Tim. iv. 12.) tautological. Lust and lewdness are now restricted to one particular vice, and usury is applied no longer to what is considered as the proper *interest* of money; meat and *food*, quick and

learned reader, and in others has altered the meaning, but for these the translators are of course not accountable. Their principal fault is the arbitrary rendering the same Greek word by different English ones. They avow in their preface, that they have not tied themselves to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words, which was in their opinion to savour more of curiosity than wisdom; and we might have agreed with them, if they had only taken the liberty of varying in such words as they specify, *pain* for *ache*, *joy* for *gladness*. This inaccuracy in this respect has produced a greater diversity in the translation than exists in the original, and quite prevents the reader from observing peculiarities of style; as verses (for example, Mark ix. 40. and Luke ix. 50. and Matt. xxvi. 41. and Mark xiv. 38.) which are respectively identical in the original, differ in the version. In argumentative passages this varying is especially to be regretted, since it causes obscurity. For instance, in the fourth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, ἐλογίσθη and λογίζεται, which occur so frequently, are rendered *counted*, *reckoned*, *imputed*. In St. John's epistle, (v.) *record* and *witness* alternate, and *testament* and *covenant* in that to the Hebrews. (vii. viii.) Καταλλαγή, which is found only in the same epistle, (v. 11.) they render *atonement*,

living, faithless and *unbelieving*, have also ceased to be synonymous; and to *let*, (Rom. i. 13. 2 Thess. ii. 7.) and to *prevent*, have changed meanings. The use of *of*, for *by* and *from*, produces frequent ambiguity, as "they shall all be taught *of* God," (John vi. 45.) "A man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard *of* [παρὰ] God;" (John viii. 40.) and (Matt. ii. 15.) "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken *of* [*by*] the Lord *by* [*through*] the prophets;" showing in the original that it was the Lord who was the agent that inspired them. The same may be said of ἐν, which ought often to be rendered *by* or *to*, instead of *in*; "to be glorified *by* [*in*] his saints," (1 Thess. i. 10.) and "it pleased God to reveal his Son [*in*] to me." (Gal. i. 16.)

while they translate in the verse preceding the verb *κατηλάγημεν*, *reconciled*. To the modern reader, *we have received the atonement*, seems to be an improper expression; but when our version was made, atonement, that is, the being *at one mind*, was still sometimes put for reconciliation. It would, however, have been better not to have used it here, because in the Old Testament these translators made it represent *ιλασμός*, that is, *propitiation*. In consequence of this arbitrary variation^g, many passages lose much of their beauty and perspicuity, and in some the sense is affected^h.

^g I select the following, as instances, out of many that might have been cited, in which uniformity of phrasing would have made the translation much more emphatic. Διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς ὁ γὰρ Θεὸς αὐτοῖς ἐφάνερωσε, because that which may be known of God is *manifest* to them, for God hath *manifested* it, (Rom. i. 19.) Ἵνα διὰ τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως τῶν γραφῶν, τὴν ἐλπίδα ἔχωμεν· ὁ δὲ Θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως δόξη ὑμῖν τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν, that through *patience* and the *comfort* of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now may the God of *patience* and *comfort* grant, &c. (Rom. xv. 4, 5.) Ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἔσθῃ ἐλπιούσιν, ὁ δὲ Θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος πληρῶσαι ὑμᾶς πάσης χαρᾶς καὶ εἰρήνης. (12, 13.) “In him shall the nations *hope*: Now may the God of *hope* fill you with all joy and peace in believing.” Οὐχ ὅτι ἱκανοὶ ἐσμεν ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν, λογισασθαί τι, ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν, ἀλλ' ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅς καὶ ἱκάνωσεν ἡμᾶς διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης. Not as if we were *able* of ourselves to reason at all as of ourselves, for our *ability* is of God, who has made us *able* ministers of the new covenant. (2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.)

^h Thus the eighth chapter of the Acts is so translated, as to countenance a belief in witchcraft. We read that Simon Magus *bewitched* the people of Samaria, and that he himself *wondered* at the miracles of Philip; though in the original it is the same verb that is used of both. *They take pleasure in*, συνευδοκοῦσι, (Rom. i. 32.) is softened down to, “He was *consenting* to his death;” (Acts viii. 1.) from the *consentiens* of the Vulgate when used of Paul, though faithfully rendered by Tyndale. Κλέπτῃς and ληστῃς, *thief* and *robber*, are confounded in our version; the persons who attacked the traveller to Jericho were not thieves in the present sense of the word; and the malefactors, between whom our Lord was crucified, were robbers;

Occasionally they fall into the opposite error, by rendering two Greek words by one English, which does not answer to bothⁱ.

for theft was not among the Jews a capital offence. A harshness and severity, not in the original, is given by the frequent use of the word *fool*, which is made to stand not for *μωρός* only, but for terms of a much milder import, as *ἄφρων*, *ἀνόητος*, *ἄσοφος*, *inconsiderate*, *thoughtless*, *unwise*. Many instructive distinctions, in the meaning of words nearly synonymous, will be observed, by examining Stephens's or Williams's Greek Concordance; and much valuable information on the subject will be collected from a perusal of Campbell's Introductory Dissertations. He distinguishes in his version between the outer and inner garment, *ἱμάτιον* and *χιτῶν*, rendering the first, *cloak*, the latter, *coat*. He translates *εὐαγγέλιζεν*, to *declare good news*; and *κηρύσσειν*, not "to *preach*," but to *proclaim the Gospel*; and *ὁμοιοπαθής*, (Acts xiv. 15. James v. 17.) not "of like passions," but of *like nature*. *Μυστήριον* means "what is *secret*, not yet revealed," but *mystery*, what is incomprehensible, and therefore cannot be revealed. *Σκληροκαρδία*, literally *hardness of heart*, does not mean inhumanity, but perverseness. With us the heart is made the seat of the feelings, but the ancients placed in it the intellect. Hence *reasoning*, (Mark ii. 7.) *thought*, (Acts viii. 22.) *comparison*, (Rom. x. 10.) and *reflection*, (Luke ii. 19.) are referred to it, and *cordatus* in Latin means *intelligent*. We may here notice the difference on this subject of figurative language in ancient and modern times. "Physici dicunt homines splene ridere, felle irasci, jecore amare corde sapere et pulmone jactari," is the remark of Cornutus upon Persius; and to the same purport, it is said in the Testament of the twelve patriarchs, (supposed to be the work of a Christian of the first century,) that God made the heart for thought, the liver for passion, the gall for bitterness, the spleen for laughter. *Blasphemy* is confined to an offence against the Deity, but *βλασφημία* means *reviling* any one, even the evil spirit; (Jude 9.) our translators, therefore, have often rendered it *defaming* or *reviling*; it would have been better if they had so done in Matt. xii. 31. *All manner of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*, &c. and (1 Tim. i. 13.) where Paul says he had been a *blasphemer*.

ⁱ "Ἄδης, the place of departed spirits, and Γέεννα, the place of future

Our translators have certainly not made the use they might of our synonymes, but the rich variety of the original can never be fully communicated to our poorer tongue. I observe, as an example, that λέγω, ἔπω, φημί, φάσκω, φράζω, ῥέω, εἶρω, ἔρειω, all answer to the English word *say*; and yet an attentive perusal will show that they are not strictly equivalent. It has been observed, that in the Sermon on the mount, the word in ordinary use is ἔπω, but what is reported as a tradition is signified by ῥέω, while λέγω is reserved for whatever our Lord authoritatively delivers as a command. In our version the three verbs in this sentence, Ἠκούσατε ὅτι Ἐρρέθη τοῖς ἀρχαῖοις, οὐ φονεύσεις, Ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὅσαν εἶπη τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ, are all represented by *say*, but

punishment, are confounded under the common name of *hell*, except in 1 Cor. xv. 55; although almost all the foreign translators, except Luther, have preserved the distinction. And the evil spirits, *demons*, are rendered *devils*, though in the original the term is exclusively appropriated to their prince. But the most important words of this class are Μεταμελέομαι and Μετανόω, and their derivatives, which are both rendered to *repent*; but the first, as the etymology shows, means to *repent* or *grieve*, the second, to *change the purpose* or *reform*. In conformity with this statement, Phavorinus defines μεταμέλεια, [the noun does not occur in the New Testament,] “dissatisfaction with one’s self for what one has done;” and μετάνοια, “a change from worse to better.” The first accordingly, if genuine, will terminate in the latter. In some passages either translation would equally answer the purpose; in others the difference is essential, in none more than the Apostle’s declaration, Ἡ κατὰ Θεὸν λύπη μετάνοιαν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀμεταμέλητον κατεργάζεται, (2 Cor. vii. 10.) which in the English version not only introduces an unsuitable play upon words, but makes him state an identical proposition; whereas if rendered as suggested, it contains an accurate definition of genuine repentance: *Godly sorrow produceth a reformation to salvation not to be repented of*. However, it must be owned, that these words are used promiscuously in the Septuagint, but the distinction is observed in the Syriac, and by Beza and Castalio in their versions, though it is not in the Vulgate.

in this instance, though not in all, our translators might have varied it by rendering their expressions, “You have heard that it was spoken to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; but I tell you, that whoever shall say to his brother, &c.”

Greek has four words, βρώσκω, ἐσθίω, τρώγω, φάγω, answering to the verb *to eat*, and no less than ten for the act of *seeing*. It is granted, that it is not always practicable to mark these shades of meaning; but Campbell has shown that it may be done frequently, and when done, the sense is more perfectly exhibited. Thus θεωρεῖν has clearly a more extensive meaning than ἰδεῖν: for the enemies of our Lord *saw* him as distinctly as his disciples; it cannot be, therefore, that whoever seeth the Son with his bodily eyes has eternal life; but it must be he that *contemplateth* or *observeth* the Son, that is, sees him as the Son, acknowledging his nature, character, and offices. The remark may be also exemplified in nouns; thus we have for a *net*, δίκτυον, ἀμφίβληστρον, and σαγήνη; and κόφινος and σπυρίς, for a *basket*; which are evidently of different dimensions, as the latter, which was capable of holding a man^k, is the word used in the miracle of feeding the five thousand^l, while the former is appropriated to that of the four thousand^m. We have παῖδιά and τέκνα, for *children*; and ὁ πλησίον, γείτων, and περὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς, for *neighbour*: φίλος and ἑταῖρος are both rendered *friend*, which in the proper sense belongs only to the first; the latter being merely a term of civility, which is addressed to the dissatisfied labourer in the vineyardⁿ, to the guest without a wedding garment^o, and to Judas^p when betraying his Master.

In the English Testament, our Saviour is called sometimes Lord, and sometimes Master, and in our modern language they are equivalent; but the latter, Διδάσκαλος, properly answers to Teacher, the former to one who has authority

^k Acts ix. 25.

^l Matt. xv. 22.

^m Mark viii. 8.

ⁿ Matt. xx. 13.

^o Matt. xxii. 12.

^p Matt. xxvi. 59.

over others, *Κύριος*, and is addressed both to men and to God. *Καθηγητής*, once employed by Matthew^p, and also rendered Master, ought to be Leader; and *Ἐπιστάτης*, peculiar to Luke, likewise translated Master, is more accurately Superintendent. *Δεσπότης* is a term of higher import than *Κύριος*. It is applied to Christ when it is the writer's object to set forth his dignity, (as in 2 Pet. ii. 1. Jude 4. and Revelation vi. 10.) and would therefore be better rendered Sovereign^q.

The most serious defect, however, in the authorized version is, the frequent omission of the definite article, originating, I presume, from familiarity with the Vulgate, in which no attempt is ever made to supply its absence, which, in that as in all Latin works, is most unfavourable to accuracy. This omission has lowered the emphasis of many declarations; for instance, *You call me Master and Lord, and you say well, for so I am*, is not equivalent to, *You call me the Master, and the Lord*; the former might be said of any teacher, the latter with propriety only of one. We may reasonably fear, that this inaccuracy has been very injurious, as it has not merely lowered the emphasis of single words, but has obscured the meaning of several passages. This, however, has not been its worst consequence, for it has withdrawn from the unlearned the most decisive Scripture testimony to the Divinity of our Saviour, and confirmed the opinion of many, that though it may be suggested by various texts, it is rarely positively asserted. A reference to five passages in the Greek will show this to be a mistake, for the following verses in our version bring before us both the Father and the Son, the first as God, the second as Man; whereas in the original the Son alone is mentioned, and his divinity is distinctly affirmed.

^p Matt. xxiii. 8.

^q I am indebted for most of these critical remarks on greek words to one of Dr. Campbell's Preliminary Dissertations.

Ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ καὶ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν, (Tit. ii. 13.) looking for *the glorious manifestation of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ*.

Ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ, (Eph. v. 5.) *in the kingdom of Christ, who is God*.

Κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, (2 Thess. i. 12.) *according to the grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ*.

Ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ Σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, (2 Peter i. 1.) *through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*.

Καὶ μόνον δεσπότην [Θεὸν] καὶ Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἀρνούμενοι, (Jude 4.) *and denying our only Sovereign [God] and Lord Jesus Christ*.

If any can entertain a doubt of the accuracy of this criticism, it will be dispelled by a consideration of the passage in the Epistle to Titus, which speaks of a manifestation of the great God. Now no one *hath seen or can see the Father, who dwelleth in unapproachable light*; and we have the authority of the Greek writer Chrysostom for asserting, that this verse applies exclusively to the Son. This error is the more extraordinary, because our translators have correctly rendered the two following verses in which the article is found, in precisely the same connection with two nouns. Ὁ Θεὸς καὶ Πατὴρ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν, *The God and Father of our Lord*^s. Τῷ Θεῷ καὶ Πατρί, *To God even the Father*^t. The passage in St. Peter is also rightly rendered both in the Bishops' Bible, and in the Rhemish Testament. Probably our translators were influenced by the authority of Erasmus. It is to be regretted, that in this instance they did not defer, as they often did, to Beza, who, long before

^s *God* is omitted in the Vulgate and in the Alexandrian MS.; but though we should drop it with Griesbach, yet the next verse shows that deity is ascribed to Jesus, and it seems to be included in the title Only Sovereign.

^a 2 Cor. i. 3.

^t 1 Cor. xv. 24.

Mr. Granville Sharp had established this canon of criticism, declared in his note upon the passage in Titus, that the genius of the Greek language requires, that where there is only one article and two nouns, the article should apply to both; and closes it with this practical conclusion, ‘Christo igitur, ut vere magno et æterno Deo, ὁμοουσίῳ καὶ συναίδιῳ sit gloria et laus omnis in sæcula sæculorum.’ Mr. Boyd, who has in many ways made his knowledge of Greek subserve the cause of Christianity, shows, in a valuable Essay appended to Dr. Clarke’s Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians, by numerous examples, that this idiom is not confined to the New Testament or to the Fathers, but prevails in those authors, who are allowed to have written in the utmost purity, both in verse and prose“. And the fact is also established by the late Dr. Wordsworth, and Bp. Middleton.

As I have enlarged upon the imperfections of the authorized version, I think it necessary to add, that they are often exaggerated; and that its general merit and its equality, at least, with those of other countries, has been strenuously maintained from its first appearance down to our own times, by persons who are competent to judge. “It is incomparably superior to any thing which might be expected in the present age,” says Bishop Middleton; “as to composition, it is simple, it is harmonious, it is energetic; and which is of no small importance, use has made it familiar, and time has rendered it sacred.” The best proof of its excellence, as observed by Whitaker, in his critical examination of Mr. Bellamy’s hardy and arrogant assertions, is, “that it has been used, since its first appearance, by the Dissenters as well as by the Church, and has been esteemed by all for its general faithfulness, and the severe beauty of its language.” To conclude, in the words of Scott, “During nearly two

“ I refer to Bishop Middleton’s treatise on the Greek Article, for a full discussion of its meaning.

hundred years our translation has been extant, and persons of various descriptions have made new translations of the whole, or particular parts; and scarcely any writer on these subjects fails to mention alterations which he supposes to be improvements. It may then be asked, How can unlearned persons know that the authorized version may be depended on? Let the inquirer, however, remember, that Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, Calvinists, and Arminians, who maintain eager controversies with each other, all appeal to the same version, and in no matters of consequence object to it; and, in fact, if all different readings, and all their alterations, were adopted, the rule of duty and the articles of faith would continue the same they now are."

SECTION VII.

On the Geography of the Holy Land.

WE naturally associate with remarkable events their locality, and the imagination forms a picture of the spot, which we wish to correct from the original. Who, though but imperfectly acquainted with the poetry and history of antiquity, has not longed at times to ascend the Acropolis of the city of Minerva, or to wander among the ruins of the ancient capital of the world? But what are the emotions of admiration which Athens or Rome can awaken in the minds of comparatively few, to the sentiments of reverence and gratitude which must touch the hearts of all believers, when they meditate on that hallowed land,

"Over whose acres walked those blessed feet,
Which eighteen hundred years ago were nailed
For our advantage on the bitter cross?"

This feeling, no doubt, from the very commencement of Christianity, led many a true devoted pilgrim

"To measure kingdoms with his feeble steps;"

and as superstition superseded, or at least alloyed, pure and

rational religion, the idea of merit connected itself more and more with that of gratification. An increasing multitude in consequence from all parts of Christendom strayed to seek

“ In Golgotha him dead who lives in heaven,”

and on their return they enumerated to their friends the various places which had been shown them as the scenes of the events of their Saviour's life. We Protestants have ceased to regard such pilgrimages as meritorious; but Palestine, from its indissoluble associations with our religion, is still frequented by our travellers. They may be less devout; they are certainly less credulous, than their predecessors; and no doubt the minute accuracy, with which even the houses of almost all who are mentioned in the New Testament are pointed out, is calculated in an enquiring age to provoke suspicion. Men are apt to pass from one extreme to another; and Dr. Clarke, in his anxiety to avoid credulity, falls, I conceive, into an unreasonable scepticism, when he doubts, that the church which the mother of the first Christian emperor erected on Calvary, three centuries after the crucifixion, really covered the Holy Sepulchre. Allowing the primitive Christians to feel like ourselves, how could they lose the knowledge of the spot, or neglect to transmit it to their posterity? And if Helena was not misled, and her informers could have no motive for preferring one quarter of the city to another, the tomb over which she erected a church is really that of our Lord; and ever since it has been venerated as his both by Christians and Mahometans. Even heathen spite was instrumental in preserving the remembrance of the spot; for when the Emperor Hadrian rebuilt the desolated city under the name of *Ælia Capitolina*, a statue of Venus was set up on the then supposed site. Clarke's opinion is powerfully supported by the editor of the *Pictorial Bible* and several later travellers, and it may be difficult to confute their objections; still,

knowing what extraordinary changes have taken place in streets and walls in ancient cities, I am satisfied with an unbroken tradition, and acquiesce in the accuracy of this appropriation; and as no traveller has expressed a doubt respecting the spot shown as our Saviour's birth-place, the cave of Bethlehem, the two most interesting places may be assumed as ascertained; and whatever changes the country has undergone in the lapse of ages, the most sceptical must allow, that there is enough to recal his Scripture reminiscences in the imperishable monuments of nature. The temple has disappeared, but the *everlasting hills* still stand around Jerusalem, as in the days of the Psalmist^{*}; and no one can call in question the position of the Mount of Olives, or doubt that the torrent that in winter flows in the vale below is the Kedron. Capernaum, Chorazin, and the neighbouring towns, have been so completely, according to our Lord's prediction, *brought down to hell*, that their sites are doubtful; but the lake itself, from which he so often taught, and on which he walked, is unchanged by time, and the Jordan still rolls its consecrated waters to the bituminous lake which covered in so remote an age the plain of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is singular that the countries which most occupy our thoughts are of insignificant dimensions; for how small are Switzerland and Greece and Palestine compared to the vast plains of Russia, Tartary, or the almost unknown empire of China! Above all we feel an interest in Palestine, and the many travellers who have published their observations on it, enable us to satisfy our curiosity. To some, however, of those for whom this book is chiefly designed, they may be unknown, and therefore I insert a brief outline of its geography. Some knowledge of the subject is not only agreeable but necessary, for our Saviour during his whole ministry was seldom stationary, but moving from town to town, and

^{*} Psalm cxxv. 2.

there are parts of the New Testament which without it are obscure; as, for example, the observation that Jesus *must needs pass through Samaria*^y, which is obvious to those alone who know that it lay between Galilee and Judæa, and that he could thus only visit the latter, without a long circuit beyond the river.

This Holy Land, as it is called both by Jews and Christians, strictly taken, extends no more than two hundred miles in length, and eighty in breadth in the middle, and ten or fifteen more or less where it widens or contracts, taking the Jordan for its limit. It is defined in the Old Testament as lying between Dan and Beersheba, cities on its northern and southern extremity. Two parallel ranges of mountains, Libanus and Anti-Libanus, high enough to have their summits covered with perpetual snow, stretch from Sidon to near Damascus, and form the northern boundary. The southern limit is called in the Bible, the river of Egypt, and it is doubtful whether this means the Nile, or an obscure stream, supposed to be the Sichor^z, on the frontier of that country near Gaza, about sixty miles south of Jerusalem. The western boundary is the Mediterranean Sea, the eastern is less definite; for though Canaan, which the Israelites were commanded to subdue, was bounded by the Jordan, the promise to Abraham included all the country west of the Euphrates. To that extent it was only possessed by David and Solomon, and much of the further part of it must have been always desert. Still we know, that two tribes and a half, by their own desire, established themselves beyond the Jordan, because they had much cattle; and the beautiful and fertile region which they occupied appears, from the report of recent travellers, to have justified their choice. It has only been explored in our own age, and has been overlooked by many, who thus reduce to still more contracted dimensions the limited territory of Palestine. The

^y John iv. 4.

^z Josh. xiii. 3. Jerem. ii. 18.

Jordan, the only river that deserves the name, for the other streams are little more than winter torrents, is a peculiar feature in the physical geography of the country. It is said to have been called Jor Dan, that is, the river Dan, from that city, in a cave near which it first appears. But we learn from Josephus, that its true source is a small lake, called from its shape the Bowl, *Phiala*, at the foot of the eastern ridge of Anti-Libanus, whence it passes underground, till it emerges from the cave. It then flows due south for about a hundred miles, expanding first into the waters of Meroer mentioned in the Old Testament, and then into the much larger lake of Galilee, whence after a rapid course it rolls into the Dead Sea, a volume of water, from two to three hundred feet in width, with a current so violent, that an expert swimmer will hardly find it practicable to cross it. Its course between the lakes is marked by rapids which render its navigation dangerous, and it is so tortuous, that in a space of sixty miles of latitude it actually traverses at least 200. In this solitary lake it is now lost. The travels of Burckhardt and Laborde had rendered it probable, that, previous to that convulsion of nature which overwhelmed the fertile plain of Sodom, it traversed it, and found its way to the Ælanitic gulph of the Red Sea, as was presumed from the appearance of a deep valley, from four to eight miles broad, which may be traced through the whole intermediate desert, and has the appearance of the ancient bed of a river. Later observers maintain, that a range of hills crosses this valley near the termination of the lake, and that its level is much lower than that of the sea. This supposition, therefore, must be abandoned, unless we have recourse to a subsidence of the lake by some violent convulsion. Be this as it may, the valley seems to have been traversed by the Israelites on their way to Moab, and to have been the route by which the treasures of Ophir were transported from Ezion-gaber to the storehouses of

Solomon. The magnificent sepulchral excavations of Petra, *in the clefts of the rocks* lately discovered in the immediate vicinity, still attest, that under the early Roman emperors this ancient capital of the territory of Esau continued to be enriched by the commerce of the east, though the prediction that *it shall be a desolation, and that no man shall abide there*, has been long literally fulfilled^a. The two lakes deserve a more minute description. The first, the lake, or, to use the Hebrew idiom, the sea of Galilee, on the shores of which our Saviour chiefly lived, is about sixteen miles in length and six in breadth; and is called by St. John the Sea of Tiberias, from a celebrated city near its lower extremity. "Its broad surface," observes Dr. Clarke, "covering the bottom of a profound valley, environed by lofty and precipitous eminences, added to the impression of a certain reverential awe under which every Christian pilgrim approaches it, gives it a character of dignity unparalleled by any similar scenery." He describes it as finer than any of the English lakes, but as inferior to Loch Lomond. "The barren aspect of the mountains, and the total absence of wood," says Buckingham, "give a cast of dulness to the picture, and this is increased to melancholy by the dead calm of its waters, and the silence which reigns throughout its whole extent, where, though it still abounds with fish, not a boat is now to be seen." A strong current through it marks the passage of the river, and when this is opposed by contrary winds, which blow with the force of a hurricane from the south-west, sweeping into the lake from the mountains, a boisterous sea is instantly raised; such as led the Apostles to exclaim, *Lord, save us, we perish*. The towns honoured by our Lord's presence have vanished, and, except the miserable remains of Tiberias, there is not a hut upon its coasts. The second lake, which greatly exceeds it in dimensions, being more than seventy miles long, derives

^a Jerem. xlix. 10—22.

its modern name, the Dead Sea, from the popular opinion, that no fish can live in it, which is erroneous; for shells are found on its shore. In the Old Testament it was called the Salt Sea, and by the Romans Asphaltites, from the bitumen with which it abounds. Its water is perfectly transparent, yet salter and heavier than that of the ocean; and, containing no less than a fourth of its weight of mineral ingredients, is of such a specific gravity, as will enable a man to float on it without motion. The air, loaded by evaporation with sulphureous vapours, is said to be injurious to vegetation: the coast is rocky and barren, and there is scarcely any population to break the solemn silence that has reigned for ages on its lonely surface, for from the quality of its water it is frequented neither by beasts nor birds. In our time it has been twice circumnavigated in boats. The first of these enterprising travellers died soon after of fatigue, without having published any account: and a description of it was reserved for Linch, an American Captain, who encountered on it a storm. He represents it as a scene of unmitigated desolation, lying at the bottom of converging descents from north to south, a sunk plain. He saw a flock of gulls fly over his head, and tasted a bitter melon, which was coated with salt and bitumen, and yielded to the feet which pressed on it, "a fruitage fair to sight;" which reminds one of Josephus's report of the apples, which deceived the touch by dissolving into ashes. When Lot lifted up his eyes, he beheld instead of it *a plain well watered every where*; and the comparison of it by Moses to the land of Egypt seems to imply, that the Jordan then flowed through it, like the Nile. The enormous sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, and three other cities of this plain, brought down upon them *swift destruction from the Lord*, who set them forth as an example of his just judgment to all future sinners. Modern travellers assure us, that the neighbouring country is volcanic; and it is highly probable, that this

awful visitation of God, who generally effects his purposes by secondary causes, was produced in part by the agency of subterranean fire. In confirmation of this supposition, we may cite the comparison in Deut. xxix. 23. *the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger.* Josephus^b reports, that in his time there were still remains of that divine fire; and Henderson, in his Account of Iceland, cites passages from the Prophets, which seem to show that their imagery is frequently drawn from volcanic eruptions. Thus Nahum, describing the majesty of God, says, *the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence; his fury is poured out like fire*^c. And Jeremiah, *Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain. I will roll thee down from the rocks, and make thee a burnt mountain*^d.

The face of Palestine is mountainous, but there are considerable plains, three of which deserve notice: 1. that of the sea, extending from the river of Egypt to the promontory of Carmel, being the land of the Philistines; 2. the region round about Jordan, on each side of the river, between the lakes; and, 3. the great plain of Jezreel, or of Esdraelon, the Armageddon of the Apocalypse, which runs from Carmel to the place where the Jordan issues from the sea of Tiberias. This central and fertile part of the land has been the scene of many a memorable contest. Here Barak descending from Mount Tabor discomfited Sisera; here fell Josiah; and here, in the picturesque language of Clarke, “from the days of Nebuchadnezzar, till the march of Buonaparte into Syria, warriors out of every nation have pitched their tents, and have had their various banners wet with the dews of Tabor and Hermon.” The copious dews, and the early and latter (that is, the autumn and spring) rains, the importance of which is so often expressed

^b Bell. Jud. IV. viii. 4.^c Nahum i. 5, 6.^d Jerem. li. 25.

in Scripture^e, combined to render it what Moses called it, *a good land, a land of brooks of waters, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat, a land of oil olive, and honey, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates, a land wherein they should eat bread without scarceness, and not lack any thing in it^f*. Its productiveness, so strikingly pourtrayed in these words and in other passages in the Old Testament, is confirmed by the testimony of Josephus^g, by heathen authors, as Tacitus^h, and by modern travellers. Our Saviour, in the parable of the sower, suited doubtless to the then state of the country, speaks of a return of sixty and even a hundred foldⁱ; and the latter we know at an earlier period repaid the labour of the patriarch Isaac^k. Such being the capability of the soil, its present state under a weak and oppressive administration, which affords no security to property, is not, as infidels have urged, contradictory to the Bible statement, that *God hath given it of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine^l*. On the contrary, its diminished population and produce confirm it; for, in the event of the Israelites breaking the covenant, these judgments were prophesied against them; and their accomplishment is a standing comment upon the Psalmist's declaration, that *He turneth a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein^m*. Under a wise and beneficent government, writes Clarke, the produce of the Holy Land would exceed all calculation; the fault, therefore, as far as the complaint of barrenness is true, rests not with the land, but the people. The complaint, however, is exaggerated. The impression made on travellers will much depend on the season in which they travel; and the remark should be

^e Deut. xi. 14. Prov. xvi. 15. Jer. iii. 3. Hosea vi. 3. Joel ii. 23. Zech. x. 1.

^f Deut. viii. 7—9.

^g iii. 3.

^h Hist. v. 6.

ⁱ Matt. xiii. 8.

^k Gen. xxvi. 12.

^l Gen. xxvii. 28.

^m Ps. cvii. 34.

confined to Judæa; for Buckingham observesⁿ, that while there the hills are as bare as imagination could paint them, and a few of the narrow valleys only are fertile; in Samaria, the very summits of the mountains are as well clothed as their sides, and the country beyond the river he describes as of extraordinary richness, with extensive plains, not yielding in natural fertility to those of Zabulon and Esdraelon. This new edition, (1853,) gives me the opportunity of adding, that since I wrote this description, short as is the period, a wondrous change has begun to take place in this consecrated country; and if unconverted Judah is at length beginning to think of restoration to their own land, the land is also preparing for the people. Ancient wells and cisterns are said to be cleared out; in many places rich soil below the sands recovered; the grape is again yielding a vintage on Mount Zion; and the time may not be far distant, when Judah shall once more literally *wash his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes*^o.

This Land of Promise, so called because promised by God to Abraham, when taken possession of by Joshua four centuries after, was portioned by lot, in twelve shares, to the tribes of Israel. That of Levi, which had the honour of having for its share the service of Jehovah, was maintained by tithes, first-fruits, and sacrifices, and had no landed property, except forty-eight cities for residence, dispersed among his brethren; but its place was supplied by one of the sons of Joseph; for both of these, Ephraim and Manasseh, were counted as tribes, since their father had been adopted instead of Reuben, who by his crime of incest had forfeited the double portion which was the privilege of primogeniture. Half one of these tribes, Manasseh, with those of Reuben and Gad, were settled, according to their own desire, east of Jordan; the others ranked in the following order, from north to south;

ⁿ p. 500.

^o Gen. xlix. 17.

Naphtali, Ashur, Zebulun, Issachar, the other half of Manasseh, Ephraim, Dan, Benjamin, Judah, and Simeon. The king of Assyria took away the ten tribes, while the descendants of David continued independent sovereigns; and these *outcasts* of Israel still remain in the distant east, we know not where hidden from Christian eyes, till the day of their visitation shall come; for a few only of their families joined Judah and Benjamin, when they availed themselves of the permission to return from Babylon. The Jews, as they were henceforward called instead of Israelites, settled in the southern extremity of Palestine, including the original allotment of Simeon, as well as their own. To this territory the name of Judæa is in the strictest sense appropriated, though generally used of the whole. The northern and more extensive division was called Galilee; and the intermediate country derived its name of Samaria from the ancient capital of the ten tribes. *All beyond the river was sometimes called, from its situation, Peræa, and thus made to include Ituræa, Trachonitis, Abylene, and Decapolis; but Josephus restricts the name to the southern portion, the lots of Reuben and Gad. Few towns are mentioned in the New Testament, and none of them are in Peræa; but we know on the authority of Josephus, that the place where the Baptist was beheaded was Machærus, a fort near the Dead Sea, erected to check the incursions of the Arabs.

Isaiah^p had foretold, that Galilee should be the chief scene of our Saviour's miracles; and it was the province most frequently honoured by his presence. He had been brought there as an infant from Egypt, and had lived there till the commencement of his ministry, so that his birth at Bethlehem had been forgotten, and he was taken by all for a Galilean. Here he generally taught, and here after his resurrection he summoned the Apostles, who were all

^p Isaiah ix. 2.

Galileans, to meet him. Josephus, who was Paul's contemporary, describes Galilee as containing above two hundred towns, the least of which had 15,000 inhabitants; and tells us, that he raised in it an army of no less than 100,000 men. Little reliance, I apprehend, can be placed upon his numbers; still, however exaggerated his statements may be, we may fairly conclude from them, that this province was in our Saviour's time very populous; and we are led to draw the same conclusion from the incidental notices in the gospels of the multitudes that attended on his preaching. It was probably in part on this account, that he preferred it to Jerusalem. Here also he was out of the power of the priests; and the lake of Genesaret enabled him readily to pass, when expedient, from the dominions of Herod to those of his brother Philip. Josephus divides Galilee into Upper and Lower; the former of which, from its large heathen population, was called *Galilee of the Gentiles*. In the former, Dan, sometimes called Paneas from the neighbouring mountain, lying on the road between Sidon and Damascus, was the principal city. It had been enlarged and beautified by Philip the Tetrarch, who called it Cæsarea, as a compliment to Tiberius; and his own name was subjoined, to distinguish it from the more celebrated Cæsarea, dedicated with heathen ceremonies to his predecessor by its founder Herod the Great. The following are the towns in Lower Galilee, named in the New Testament: Tiberias, built near hot springs towards the southern end of the lake by Herod the Tetrarch, who named it after the Emperor. On the destruction of Jerusalem, it grew in importance, as the Rabbis retired there, and it continued to be for centuries the principal seat of Hebrew learning. Nazareth, from which Jesus was called a Nazarene, because he had been brought up there, stands near abrupt precipices, over one of which the inhabitants, when enraged by his discourse in

their synagogue, attempted to cast him headlong^a. Bethsaida, the original residence of Philip, Andrew, and Peter, was raised into a city by the Tetrarch Philip, and denominated Julia, in honour of the daughter of Augustus, the wife of Tiberius. Capernaum, where Jesus paid the tribute-money for himself and Peter, may be considered more than any other place as his home. But the sites of these and other towns in the vicinity which he frequented, have not been ascertained. Joppa the original port being neither safe nor commodious, Strato's Tower, thirty miles to the north, was improved by Herod the Great, who threw out a mole, within which a fleet might always ride, and called it Cæsarea. It became his residence, and afterwards that of the Roman Governor, who only went up to Jerusalem at the great feasts, and it is therefore to be regarded as the real capital of Palestine. It is memorable for the conversion of Cornelius, the first fruits of the heathen, who being called a centurion of the Italian band, was, it may be presumed, one of the guard of honour of the representative of the Emperor. It was even as late as the crusades a place of importance, but now the surrounding country is a sandy desert; and not a living creature, except beasts of prey, are found within many miles of it. Its ruins have long been resorted to as a quarry, whenever building materials were wanted at Acre, which succeeded it as a port, and is the maritime key of the country.

Samaria, built on the hill of Shemer, preserved the name of the original proprietor, from whom the site had been purchased by king Omri, and continued to be the capital of the kingdom of Israel till its fall. It was rebuilt under Alexander the Great, and having been again destroyed by Hyrcanus, was restored by Herod, who fortified it, and in compliment to Augustus called it Sebaste, a Greek title, equivalent to the Latin Augusta. It appears to be the city

^a Luke iv. 29.

of the Samaritans which received the gospel from Philip. The name extended from the town to this central region of Palestine, but the inhabitants were regarded by the Jews as aliens; for their ancestors, though intermixed with the remains of the ten tribes, were descended from various eastern nations, which had been transplanted as a colony on their removal, and had retained their idolatry, till *the Lord sent lions among them*. In their distress they had recourse to their sovereign the king of Assyria, who sent back to them *one of the priests, whom they had carried away, to teach them the manner of the God of the land*^r. They in consequence worshipped Jehovah, but not with *the honour due unto his name*, for they continued also for a while to serve their idols. This idolatry they in time abjured, but their religious knowledge must have been most imperfect, since our Lord informed the Samaritan woman that they knew not what they worshipped. They wished to pass for the descendants of Ephraim; and on the return of Judah and Benjamin from their captivity, proposed to join them in rebuilding the Temple. Their proposal was rejected; and they had sufficient interest at the Persian court to suspend the work for a season. Such was the origin of the mutual hatred of the Jews and the Samaritans; and in the time of Alexander the Great, new offence was given, by the erection on Mount Gerizim of a rival temple, by Manasseh, son of the Jewish high priest, who retired there because he refused to repudiate his Samaritan wife. The Book of Ecclesiasticus shows that this antipathy then prevailed; for its author, though he recommends so strongly piety and virtue, closes it with a declaration, that there are three nations whom his soul abhors, and one of them, whom he declares to be in reality not a nation, is *the foolish people that dwell at Sichem*. The gospels supply instances of this mutual abhorrence, as the speech of the woman at the

^r 2 Kings xvii.

well, and their inhospitality to Jesus on another occasion. Idolatry, malice, and indeed every vice, is connected with the Jewish notion of this people; and they even altered the name of their city Sichem into Sychar, because the latter means drunkenness. When our Lord had so exasperated his enemies that they were ready to stone him, the first reproach that their fury vented itself in was, *Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil*; and the feeling is shown by the Evangelist's explanatory remark, that the Jews *have no friendly dealings with the Samaritans*. Their temple had been demolished above a century before the Christian æra; but more fortunate in their obscurity than their enemies, whose altar has been thrown down for more than eighteen hundred years, they still offer sacrifice on the mountain on which it stood; at the foot of which the woman of Samaria told our Lord, *her fathers had said that it was the place where men ought to worship*. Here yet resided in 1840 about a hundred and fifty-three individuals*, I believe the only remains of this ancient people, for their colony in Alexandria seems to be extinct; and their worship is conducted by an hereditary high priest, who, through Manasseh, the builder of the Temple, claims to be descended from Aaron. Their profession of faith, drawn up by their then high priest Eleazar at the desire of Scaliger, and their subsequent letters to their brethren whom they supposed to be settled in Europe, show that they continue to hate the Jews, from whom they differ in some of their customs and ceremonies, but principally in rejecting their traditions. They even acknowledge no prophet after Moses, and receive as Scripture only the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Judges, which they write in a peculiar character, which is generally supposed to be the original one, for which the Jews substituted that of their conquerors. Their Pentateuch is esteemed of the highest critical value; for as it is sub-

* Elliott's Travels in Syria.

stantially the same with that of the Jews, and as the enmity between the two nations prevented the probability of its being a transcript in later times, our external evidence for the text is carried higher than the date of the Greek translation, at least up to the captivity, probably even to the revolt of the ten tribes from Rehoboam. Sychar, or Shechem, still exists under the appellation of Naplous, a corruption of Neapolis, that is, the new town, so called as succeeding Samaria as the capital. Jacob's well, being dug out of the rock, is even now identified a little beyond the town, where the narrow valley expands into a fertile field, which might be the land which the Patriarch took with his sword and his bow from the Amorite, and bequeathed to Joseph, whose bones were there deposited. Gerizim and Ebal, the mountains which enclose it like walls, were distinguished in the annals of Israel. On each had been stationed a deputation from six of the tribes, on the one to bless, on the other to curse, the nation as they kept or broke the Law. Upon one of them, sacrifices had been offered, and stones erected, exhibiting a transcript of the Law, or some portions of it, as Moses had commanded; but upon which is still in dispute. The Hebrew Pentateuch reads Ebal, the Samaritan, Gerizim; Kennicot decides in favour of the latter, and probability confirms his decision; for it is natural to think that the Samaritans, who had the choice of both, would prefer the mountain of blessing for the site of their temple. This command, and the recollection that it was at Shechem that Abraham erected the first altar to Jehovah, explain why the Samaritans should suppose that this was the spot selected by the Almighty. The fertility of the plain gave it an advantage over the mountains of Jerusalem; and Shiloh in the vicinity may be regarded as the original metropolis, for it was in that central spot that Joshua made the distribution of the land, and set up the tabernacle. The height of Jerusalem,

1500 feet above the sea, gives it a more agreeable temperature; but it was probably chosen by David as his capital from his birth in the neighbourhood; and the strength of its position made up for other deficiencies.

In Judæa, exclusive of the capital and the small places in its immediate vicinity, Bethphage, Bethany, and Emmaus, which on account of its natural hot baths became afterwards a place of importance, the New Testament mentions Ephraim, Bethlehem, and Jericho. Ephraim, eight miles to the north of Jerusalem, was the retreat of Jesus, after he had provoked his enemies by raising Lazarus from the grave. Bethlehem, his birth-place, only six miles distant, is pleasantly situated on an eminence in a fertile soil, which proper cultivation would render, what its name imports, a place abounding in food. Jericho, the first city taken from the Canaanites, was razed to the ground by Joshua, who denounced the extinction of the family of him who should presume to rebuild it. The prediction was fulfilled in the reign of Ahab, but the town flourished as the seat of the schools of the prophets; and in the time of our Saviour, it yielded only to Jerusalem in size and magnificence, though it is now a wretched village. It was situated in the great plain at the distance of twenty miles, and the road to it was much infested by robbers, a fact which is impressed upon our memory by the benevolence of the good Samaritan. Hebron, twenty miles to the south, is not named, but it is supposed to be the city in the hill country which was the residence of Zacharias, as it was one of those belonging to the Levites. It is memorable as the place near which Abraham entertained the angels, and where he and his wife, his son and his grandson Jacob, were buried.

Hebron was the seat of David's kingdom, till he had taken Jerusalem from the Jebusites. That city has been ever since, under Jewish, Roman, Christian, and Mahometan sovereigns, the most important in Palestine, and, it may be

added; the most interesting in the world, being regarded as holy by the three great religious divisions of mankind. By the followers of the false prophet it is esteemed second only to Mecca, their place of pilgrimage, and at the commencement of his career he had even given it the preference. The Jews retire to it from all parts, that they may be interred within its sacred soil; and it is endeared to Christians, as the temporary burying-place of their Lord. The Mount of Olives, where he wept over its approaching ruin, and where Titus, its destined destroyer, encamped, being higher than the city, commands a complete view of it. Some of the trees which give it a name still grow there, but the general aspect around is blighted, and the bare rock appears through the scanty sward. A few gardens remain on the sloping base of Mount Zion, and a grove of aged olive trees in the valley below is supposed to mark the site of the garden of Gethsemane. As seen from this mount, modern Jerusalem has an imposing appearance; but on entering it, the illusion vanishes: there are no squares, the streets are narrow, the buildings mean; and it may be truly said, as in the complaint of Jeremiah^e, *from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed*. Yet we are informed by some who have seen it, that the houses are substantially built of stone, and that it is not inferior in its appearance to Smyrna and other flourishing Asiatic cities. Dr. Richardson, who had better opportunities of judging than most of our modern travellers, estimated the population in A.D. 1818, at 20,000, and it seems to have been increasing since his time; but when our Saviour frequented it, we may presume that it was inferior in population to few in the Roman empire. Josephus allows nearly five miles for the circumference of its walls; it is at present less than three, and the site is not precisely the same, for our Saviour suffered without the gates; but when Christianity tri-

^e Lam. i. 6.

umphed over Paganism, the population gathered round this venerated spot, which became the centre of the modern city, while Mount Zion is almost entirely excluded, and under partial cultivation. It was called Golgotha, the place of a skull, it is supposed from its shape; but to the Christians of the West, who derive their theological vocabulary from the Latin version of the Scriptures, it is known under the name of Calvary. It is described not as a distinct hill, but as a moderate projection from the lower slope, with the rock rising considerably above it. Few towns have undergone greater changes, and the minute description of Josephus is not very intelligible; still, as Gibbon observes, the natural landmarks cannot be mistaken or removed^a. It covered the oblong area of two limestone hills, of steep ascent on every side but the north. The highest of these, Mount Zion, contained the city of David; the other, Moriah, was the site of the temple; and a third, Mount Acra, had been levelled under the Maccabæan Princes. Jerusalem was inclosed within an amphitheatre of eminences of more commanding elevation, parted from them by three valleys, the shallow one of the Rephaim, the wider one of Jehoshaphat, and the deep ravine of Gehenna, so called from the son of Hinnom. There the Israelites used to make their children pass through the fire to Moloch; and as their shrieks were drowned by the sound of drums, it was also called Tophet, from their Hebrew name. A fire was afterwards kept burning in it, to consume the filth of the city, and this rendered it an appropriate image of the unquenchable flames of hell. It opens into the valley of Jehoshaphat, the favourite burying place of the Jews, which is watered during the winter months by the Kedron, and is presumed by Mahometans and by some interpreters of Joel iii. 2. to be the destined scene of final judgment. The site of the temple is a capacious area, on which, amid gardens,

^a Decline and Fall, iv. 23.

stand two venerated mosques, too holy for any but the Moslem to enter; the principal of which, though the reputed work of the Khalif Omar after the surrender of the city, appears to have been an ancient church, which has been accommodated to the simple worship of Islam. It must be peculiarly painful to the Israelite, that *a house of prayer for all nations* should be monopolised by the followers of the false Prophet, who boast of his own descent through Hagar from Abraham, whom they claim as a professor of their religion. The chief mosque, according to Dr. Clarke, excels in magnificence all in the Turkish dominions, but he could only judge from the exterior; for neither Jew nor Christian are permitted to enter the sacred area. We have, however, descriptions of the interior both from Ali Bey and from Richardson; the former visiting it in the disguise of a Mahometan, the latter, with a dispensation from the governor, whom he had treated successfully as a physician. The area inclosed is a square of half a mile, within which must have been all the buildings of the temple. This was in our Saviour's time, as it had been for ages, the great ornament and glory of Jerusalem; and as the spot chosen by God for his dwelling among men, it is more interesting to the believer in revealed religion than any other. It is desirable that the Christian should form a correct idea of it, as in the epistles, particularly those to the Ephesians and the Hebrews, the doctrines of our holy faith are expressed in terms borrowed from this edifice, and its religious services. Happily Josephus, who had often worshipped within its courts, has given so minute a description, that we are better acquainted with it, than with any other of the celebrated buildings of antiquity, which like this have perished, without leaving a vestige.

It is a peculiarity of the Mosaic dispensation, that Sacrifice, the most important religious act, could only be performed on the single spot where it should please the

Almighty to set his name, after he had given his people possession of the promised land. They were not, however, required to wait for that event, as Moses had been instructed on Mount Sinai how to form a proper dwellingplace for Jehovah, who condescended to be their King as well as God; and as they were to be for years a wandering people living in tents, this, his palace as well as sanctuary, was of necessity of the like character. In the Pentateuch^y we have the details of its construction, of the curtains that were to protect it from the weather, and of the skreen that was to inclose it; and Moses not only received verbal instructions, but had a pattern shown him. It might be reasonably inferred, that such full instructions from God himself must have some important end in view; and the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, who quotes the admonition^z, *see that thou make all things according to the pattern*, shows that the sanctuary, the priest, and the offering, were shadows of heavenly ordinances. The tabernacle was an oblong square, divided by a veil of embroidered linen, which typified the human nature of our Redeemer, and separated the outward sanctuary from the inner, which represented Heaven. The latter the high priest alone was allowed to enter, but only on the day of atonement, when, as the representative of Jesus, he brought in the blood of the sacrifices. In the outward sanctuary were the altar of incense, a table upon which were placed twelve loaves according to the number of the tribes, and a golden lamp with seven lights. In the inner, distinguished as the Holy of Holies, was the Ark, a small wooden gilt chest, with a cover of solid gold, called the propitiatory or mercy seat, because the high priest sprinkled it twice with blood to make atonement for his own sins, and then for those of the people. Two carved figures, the cherubim, who overshadowed it with their wings, seem to denote angels stoop-

^y Exodus xxv.—xxvii.

^z Heb. viii. 5.

ing down to look into the mystery of Redemption. Here the Divine Presence, or Shekinah, rested visibly in a cloud, and hence issued the oracular answer. God is therefore addressed as *dwelling between the cherubim*. The chest was called the Ark of the Covenant, because it contained the tables on which the Decalogue was inscribed. There were deposited in it also a pot of manna, as a specimen of the food from Heaven with which the Israelites had been sustained in the wilderness; and Aaron's rod, which budded as a sign that the priesthood was established by divine command in his family. The tabernacle, being so constructed as to be taken to pieces, removed with the Israelites from encampment to encampment, till on the conquest of Canaan it was pitched in Shiloh, twenty-five miles from Jerusalem. Here the Ark remained till it was presumptuously brought into the field by the sons of Eli; and God was pleased to punish his people, by delivering it into the hands of their enemies. The Philistines, who had suffered severely for keeping it, restored it of their own accord, when it was placed at Kirjath-jearim, whence it was afterwards brought by David with much solemnity to Jerusalem. The king after God's own heart was preparing materials for erecting a permanent mansion for its reception; but this honour was by a divine command reserved for his son and successor Solomon, a man of peace. The temple was on the same plan as the moveable tabernacle, but on a larger scale. It was burnt by Nebuchadnezzar on the capture of Jerusalem; and the true God remained without a house, in which he could be worshipped in the manner he had been pleased to appoint, till it was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, after the return from the captivity.

The aged men who had worshipped in the first temple, lamented when they saw the foundations of the second laid; for they regretted the irrecoverable loss of the Ark, and the absence of the Shekinah. To encourage them, Haggai pro-

phesied, that *the glory of this latter house should be greater than of the former*^a, a prediction fulfilled, though not with observation, when the *Lord, the Messenger of the Covenant, suddenly came to his temple*^b. The Jew, who considers that this house has been long destroyed, and that no other temple but a mosque now occupies its place, must acknowledge the impossibility of its literal accomplishment by any future Messiah; while the Christian is satisfied with the interpretation, because, though the temple was rebuilt after five centuries by Herod the Great, as it was not taken down at once, but gradually restored, it has always been considered as the same building. He employed upon it several thousand workmen for nine years; yet the Jews still continued to enlarge it with additional buildings, so that they were justified in asserting, that it had been forty-six years in building; nor was it completed till the government of the successor of Festus, not long before its destruction. It occupied the highest ground in the city, but was itself commanded by the tower Antonia, which Herod had erected, and named after his original patron Mark Antony. This communicated with the temple, and was occupied by a Roman garrison, and is the castle out of which the chief captain and soldiers issued to rescue St. Paul from the populace^c.

The different nature of our religious worship and that of the Israelites, has occasioned an equal difference in the places appropriated to that purpose. Where the service consists in prayer and exhortation, a capacious building must be provided for the congregation: where sacrifice is the principal act, an altar is most conveniently placed in the open air; and the building, which is merely the symbolical residence of the Deity, which the laity have no need to enter, and from which they were by the Mosaic ritual excluded, may be of small dimensions. None, therefore, of the reli-

^a Haggai ii. 9.

^b Malachi iii. 1.

^c Acts xxi.

gious edifices of the ancients (for the principle is as applicable to heathen temples as to that of the true God) will bear any comparison in extent to our larger cathedrals. As soon as the primitive Christians were able to provide themselves with places of public worship, the model upon which they built was not the Temple, but the *Basilica*, or court of justice; and hence that name is still given to the seven more distinguished of the ancient churches of Rome, erected by the first Christian emperors. The Ναός, or Temple, properly so called, was ninety feet long, by thirty wide, into which our Saviour, not being *a priest after the order of Aaron*^d, never entered; but it stood within an Ἱερόν, or sacred inclosure, in which he and other worshippers attended; and this is a distinction carefully preserved by the Evangelists, though seldom retained by any translators, and altogether disregarded by our own. The consecrated area was a rocky eminence, and the side of the valley opposite the mount of Olives was lined by a stupendous wall 450 feet high, of blocks of white stone of a prodigious magnitude. Some of them, we learn from Josephus^e, were not less than forty-five cubits in length; the disciples therefore, pointing them out to their Lord, might well say, *See what very large stones are here*^g. The outer inclosure was entered through nine entrances, one of which of Corinthian brass, higher and more magnificent than the rest, is supposed to be that called *the Beautiful Gate*^h. This the court of the Gentiles, who were not permitted to proceed beyond it, was surrounded by colonnades, one of which was called the Porch of Solomon, because it stood upon the terrace which he had raised from the valley in order to enlarge the space; and our latest travellers think, that this substructure partially remains. Josephus calls it the royal portico, and he says that no one could look down from its flat roof without being seized with

^d Heb. vii. 11.
stones, A. T.

^e Ant. xv. 11.
^g Mark xiii. 1.

^f ποτανοί, what manner of
^h Acts iii. 2.

dizziness. The south-east corner of it is supposed to be the "Pinnacle," or rather wing, *πτεγύγιον*, from which Satan tempted our Saviour to precipitate himself. As the Jews did not worship in this outer court, they conceived that it might be used for secular purposes, and therefore allowed it to be frequented by the money-changers, and sellers of cattle. It was parted from their own by a low stone wall, upon which were pillars, with the inscription, "Let no alien enter the holy place." This explains the metaphor in the epistle to the Ephesiansⁱ, by which St. Paul describes the union of Jewish and Gentile converts in one church, a mystery, or, as we ought to render it, a secret, which, as he observes, he was commissioned to reveal; *But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ; for he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.* The court of the Israelites was divided into two; in the outer one appropriated to the women was the treasury, where the people brought their voluntary offerings for the purchase of victims, and defraying the other expenses of the temple; in the inner the men worshipped. Again, within this was the court which the priests alone might enter, and here was the brazen altar on which they sacrificed. Magnificent as these courts with their buildings were, they were surpassed by the temple itself, which arose beyond the altar; and which, unlike most churches in our own country, faced the west, as does the celebrated one of St. Peter at Rome. From its elevation, it was visible at a distance; and it is described by Josephus as a snowy mountain, being built of the whitest stone, and was roofed with plates of gold, which when the sun shone upon them were too dazzling for the eye. Like the tabernacle, it was divided into two parts by a veil, which was rent in twain at the crucifixion, emblematically denoting abolition of all distinction between worshippers, and that

ⁱ Ephes. ii. 13.

the privilege of the high priest of entering within the inner sanctuary, was now communicated to all believers, who through the Mediator's death have access by a *new and living way* to the Almighty upon his mercy-seat^j. The furniture of the outer sanctuary had been renewed, but the Ark and other sacred articles in the Holy of Holies perished with the first temple; and that of the second is described as empty, upon the authority of Pompey, the only pagan who ever presumed to enter it. Within the sacred area were rooms for the Priests, the Sanhedrim, and other purposes; and it is supposed that our Lord alluded to them when he said, *in my Father's house are many mansions*.

SECTION VIII.

A sketch of the Mosaic Ritual, and of the typical character, both of the Law and of Scripture History.

In ancient times, and among the heathen still, the most important part of religious worship was the offering a portion of the property of the worshipper, and that not only of the produce of the earth, but of animals. The first sacrifice recorded is that offered by Cain and Abel. The former brought of the fruits of the earth, but this, which was no more than a mere acknowledgment of the bounty of the God of nature, such as the deist or uninstructed pagan might present, was rejected; while the lamb of the latter was accepted. Divines in general conclude, that the reason why it was accepted was, that in offering it, Abel confessed himself to be a sinner, and that as a sinner he did not presume to worship, except through the shedding of the blood of that Lamb of God, which his offering prefigured. It is true that this is only a conclusion; but this act of worship is recorded not to explain the nature of sacrifice, but on account of its fatal result; and it appears from the context,

^j Heb. x. 20.

that it had not been then instituted, for it is said to have been in *process of time*, rather, end of the days, that is, on the sabbath^k. It is inferred, I conceive with the highest probability, that the coats of skin which Jehovah made for Adam and Eve, to supply effectually the place of the leaves with which they sought to cover their nakedness, were taken from animals, which he had instructed them to sacrifice; for they were not permitted to use them, as we have been since Noah's time, for food. The Apostle to the Hebrews^l seems to set the question at rest, when he observes, that it was *by faith that Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain*; as faith presupposes a previous command, and a belief in its efficacy, which could be learnt only from revelation; for it is hard to conceive, how on the principles of mere reason, if the doctrine of propitiation through a vicarious substitute be unknown, the putting to death of God's creatures without his command could be conceived to be a method of obtaining his favour.

Even those who oppose this general belief, both of modern and ancient divines, must allow, that the Mosaic law was given by God; and it is more reasonable to suppose, that the bloody sacrifices which it appointed, and which were already in use among the Israelites, and after the example of Noah among all his descendants, wherever dispersed, were originally commanded by God, than an invention of man. Under Christianity, sacrifice is abolished; and the reason for its abolition seems to be, that though a divine, it was only a temporary, institution; and that as other types ceased when the antitype had come, so our great High Priest, by *one offering of himself once for all*, superseded the sacrifices of bulls and goats. I cannot imagine that these, nor what is so closely connected with them the priesthood of a *carnal commandment*, will be revived; and though I feel the incongruity of interpreting the same descriptions in part

^k Gen. iv. 3.

^l Heb. xi. 4.

literally and in part figuratively, I incline to believe, that the Jews, when restored to their own land, and Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited, will not restore the Temple service, but worship only *in spirit and in truth*.

Originally, as we learn from the history of the Patriarchs, the worshippers of Jehovah sacrificed wherever they settled; but upon the giving of the Law, this most solemn act of religion was restricted to one spot, that is, before the Ark, the symbolical Residence of the Deity, which was finally settled at Jerusalem. When therefore God in his providence, by the hands of the Romans, destroyed his own Temple, he signified, by rendering the worship which he had himself commanded impossible, that its purpose was completed, and that could only be answered *in the death of that Lamb, without blemish and without spot*¹, which verily was foreordained in the Divine decree before the foundation of the world. Thus when the time was come that the Mosaic law should *vanish away*, the Jew, however willing, could no longer perform its most important ordinance; and the Christian had learnt, from the epistle to the Hebrews, to understand, that his Master, by *his one offering of himself, had perfected for ever them that are sanctified*. There is therefore in the Christian Church neither sacrifice, nor priest, in the proper sense of the words, that is, one who, according to the writer's definition, *offers gifts and sacrifices*^m, for Christ himself is the only *Priest*; and the clergy are elders or *presbyters*, (by abbreviation priests,) who preside not at the *altar*, for we have none, having no victim to offer, but at the Lord's *table*, to distribute the bread and wine, which commemorate his offering himself upon the Cross. The whole body of believers, indeed, is called by St. Peterⁿ, a *royal priesthood*, but this is only in a figure, as appointed to show forth the *praises of him who hath called them out of darkness*; or, in the language of St. Paul^o, *to present their*

¹ 1 Pet. i. 19, 20. ^m Heb. viii. 3. ⁿ 1 Pet. ii. 9. ^o Rom. xii. 1.

bodies a living sacrifice; while he as a real Priest still performs in heaven for them the office of Intercessor.

The original Sacrifice, and the only one we read of before the giving of the Law, was that called *Olah*, or Ascension, because, with the exception of the skin, it entirely ascended in flame, rendered in the Septuagint *Holocaust*, that is, whole burnt-offering. This was also among heathen nations, as well as in the family of Abraham, the ordinary worship. The victim must be a male, and the offerer laid his hands upon it, to indicate that he transferred to it his own iniquity; a libation was then poured upon it by the priest, the throat was cut through at a single stroke, and the blood, being caught in a vessel, was sprinkled about the altar, and poured out at the foot of it to make atonement. It was then seasoned with salt, and consumed. The heathen sacrificed various animals to their gods, according to their reputed character; but the Israelites were restricted to tame ones from their herds and folds, bulls, goats, and sheep. Such a system of worship is favourable of course to the rich; but the merciful Author of the Code considerably permitted the less wealthy members of the congregation to offer instead a turtle dove or pigeon; and that none might be excluded from worshipping by poverty, a *meat*, that is, a flour offering, either in the natural state or baked, might be substituted even for the birds. The Peace-offerings (*Shalem*), an original revelation to Moses, were offered either in gratitude for blessings received, or as a supplication for those that were sought. They were so called, because he that offered them regarded himself as thereby reconciled to God. In this instance also the offerer laid his hands upon the victim, because all worship should begin with a confession of sin, and atonement. The Peace-offerings were to be divided into three parts: the rump, the kidneys, and the interior fat, were to be consumed upon the altar as the portion of Jehovah; the breast and right shoulder, called *heave* and

wave offerings, because heaved, that is, lifted up, and waved to and fro before the altar, to consecrate them, became the property of the priest as peace-maker; while the third was eaten by the offerer with his friends as a feast, to indicate the peace which he had attained. These sacrifices were voluntary; but there were others of a piacular nature presented to the Deity to deprecate his wrath, which under certain circumstances were required. They are divided into Sin-offerings, *Khatah*; and Trespass-offerings, *Asham*. The former seem to have been appointed for such violations of the law from ignorance or heedlessness, especially in religious worship, as if committed presumptuously were punishable with death: the latter, for known deviations from the ceremonial law, and for sins against men; but we do not know the precise distinction between them, though they could not essentially differ, because offered either on account of the commission of a sin, or the omission of a duty. The same parts of the victim were burnt as in the peace-offerings; the rest, when offered for the high priest or for the people, were also burnt without the camp; but if for an individual, they were eaten by the priest, who thus typically bore his iniquity.

Such were the occasional sacrifices of individuals; but there were others constantly offered at stated times for the nation. Every day at nine o'clock in the morning, and at three in the afternoon, a lamb was sacrificed as an holocaust, with an oblation of flour and a libation of wine, a priest at the same time offering incense on the golden altar within the temple, while the service was accompanied with the mental prayer of the congregation. The service was doubled on the sabbath; and on the feasts of the new moon, two bullocks, a ram, and seven lambs, were consumed, together with a kid for a sin-offering, to show that even the fulfilment of a divine commandment was insufficient to render worshippers acceptable, unless they acknowledged their sinfulness. The

first day of Tisri, the seventh month of the ecclesiastical year, as beginning the civil, was regarded as holier than the others, and was distinguished by an additional offering, and kept like a sabbath by abstinence from servile work. It is called the Feast of Trumpets, because those instruments were then blown more frequently than on other sacred days. Such were the ordinary national feasts; but the Law established three of greater solemnity of a week's duration, which all the men were required to attend. Thousands, we know, continually came even from the remotest countries; still the attendance could never have been general at them all, even of Jews dwelling within the holy land. Attendance was not compulsory, but left to individual discretion; and it must have been understood that a considerable latitude was allowed, as even our Lord, *made under the law*, and desirous of *fulfilling all righteousness*, did not feel himself bound to be present at all that occurred during his ministry. These festivals were so contrived as to honour Jehovah as the God both of nature and of grace, by combining a commemoration of temporal and spiritual blessings. Thus the first and greatest, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which immediately succeeded the Passover, and was so called from their sole use of it during its continuance, to show the haste with which their ancestors departed out of Egypt, was marked on the second day, the day after the sabbath, by waving before the Lord the first sheaf, in gratitude for the approaching harvest, accompanied with the significant burnt-offering of a lamb without blemish; and the whole festival recalled to their mind their liberation from bondage. On the fiftieth day from this feast, called therefore Pentecost by the Hellenistic Jews, and in the Law the Feast of Weeks, because it followed after seven of them, they celebrated the completion of the harvest, and at the same time the delivery of the Law from Mount Sinai. The Feast of Tabernacles, so called from their dwelling while it

lasted in booths on their house roofs, was a grateful acknowledgment of the termination of their wanderings in the desert, and their establishment in the promised land; while the Feast of Ingathering, which followed and so extended the rejoicings to eight days, was instituted as a thanksgiving for the fruits of the year, especially of the vintage. This commemoration of earthly blessings has not been prominently brought forward in the services of the Christian Church; yet the two first of these festivals reappear in Easter and Whitsunday, when we record the rising of the first fruits from the dead, the antitype of the first sheaf; and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, when *the Law went forth from Jerusalem*; and no doubt it was purposely designed that both should occur on the Christian Sabbath. We have no feast corresponding to that of Tabernacles, the antitype of which must be sought either in heaven, or our Lord's personal reign on earth. It was the season of the greatest rejoicing, and the sacrifices were far more abundant. On each day of the other feasts, they were to add to the daily usual offering only the same animals as on the new moons; but the Feast of Tabernacles began with as many as thirteen bulls, one it should seem for every tribe, and twice the number of rams and lambs, the former lessening each day till it was reduced to one. In the course of time new feasts were instituted, that of Purim or Lots, kept for two days, in commemoration of Esther's deliverance of the nation, and that of the Dedication of the Temple, which lasted seven, and was also called the Feast of Lights, because accompanied with illuminations. It was instituted by Judas Maccabæus when he purified the temple from idols, and restored the worship of God; and we learn from our Lord's attendance on it, that he had no objection to religious services appointed by the State. The celebration of these were not like the three great feasts confined to Jerusalem.

Religion was the primary, but not the exclusive, object of

the divinely appointed festivals, for the first and last days only were sabbaths, on which work was prohibited, and the intermediate ones were employed in trading and social entertainments; for the first fruits and second tithes were not to be eaten at home, but the produce of them was to be brought to Jerusalem to be converted into food, on which the proprietors were to feast with their friends, the poor, and the priests. As at the fairs of the middle ages, devotion, business, and pleasure were combined on these occasions; and they must have had the happiest tendency to produce a patriotic and friendly feeling among all who attended them. The ceremonial Law, we learn from an Apostle, was a burden that neither his contemporaries nor their fathers were able to bear; and we have reason to be thankful that it has not been imposed upon Christians. But we are mistaken if we suppose that it communicated a gloomy character to the Temple service. On the contrary, the tribes went up to Jerusalem at the feasts *to give thanks unto the name of the Lord*^p. They were seasons of national enjoyment as well as devotion; and there was only a single fast, on which they were to take no food, and to *afflict their souls*. On this day of atonement, the high priest offered for the sins of the whole nation an expiation of the most extraordinary character, which, consisting of two goats, one sacrificed as a sin-offering, and the other dismissed into the wilderness after he had confessed over it their sins, together prefigured most significantly (what neither alone could have done) *the High Priest of our profession*, both dying for our sins, and rising again for our justification. The Jewish high priest, unlike his great anti-type, was then obliged to present for himself a sin-offering before he could pass, as he did on this day only, through the veil into the inner sanctuary. This he twice entered, first to burn incense, and to touch the Mercy-seat with blood on his own account; and secondly, with the

^p Ps. cxxii.

blood of the goat, for the purification of the people. And for this act of humiliation he laid aside his magnificent robes of mystic meaning, and wore only the linen vest of an ordinary priest.

From this mode of worship, as familiar to the first Christians as it is strange to us, the Apostles often drew metaphors, the full force and beauty of which are lost upon the modern reader, unless he has paid attention to the subject. Thus St. Paul exhorts the Romans to offer, in contradistinction to slain animals, *their own bodies, a living sacrifice*^q, which he calls a *rational*^r *worship*. And he declares his readiness to die for the Philippians in sacrificial language, *If I be poured^s forth, σπένδομαι, as a drink offering, I joy and rejoice with you all^t*. We too, when a man exposes himself to danger or loss for another, say, that he sacrifices himself, but it is without thinking of the origin and energy of the phrase.

All these sacrifices were of Divine appointment, but we cannot presume that they had any intrinsic value; and we learn from the epistle to the Hebrews, that inspired commentary on the Law, that the blood with which Moses purified the patterns of things in the heavens, was only efficacious as typical of that of the Lamb of God^u. The necessity of some more precious victim than bulls or goats is shown by the simple fact of the repetition of such offerings; for if really efficacious, they would, as the Apostle reasons^x, have ceased to be offered, whereas their continuance proves them to be not the removal, but the remembrance, of sins. Such too as they were, they were limited in their application, for there were none for such presumptuous sins as adultery and murder. David therefore, when his conscience is awakened to a sense of his guilt, exclaims, *Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it^y*. It was to

^q Rom. xii. 1. ^r Reasonable service, E. T. ^s If I be offered upon the sacrifice, E. T. ^t Phil. ii. 17. ^u Heb. ix. 23.
^x Heb. x. 2. ^y Ps. li. 16.

a better sacrifice than any he could offer that he looked, when he says in the same Psalm, *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow^z*; and this consideration gives an emphasis to the affirmation, *the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin^a*. The typical nature of this mode of worship is thus expressed in the fortieth Psalm, as cited in the epistle to the Hebrews, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure; then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second^b*, is the Apostle's comment; and therefore, as Christ succeeded in the room of all the sacrifices, it is reasonable to consider him as the antitype of them all; and all are in fact referred to him in the Scriptures. Thus Isaiah predicts, that Jehovah shall *make his soul a trespass-offering^c*; and he is called by St. Paul both a *peace-offering* and a *sin-offering^d*. As our *passover*, he delivers us from the bondage of sin, typified by that of Egypt; like the *scape-goat*, he bears away our guilt; and as the lamb daily offered, he is our burnt-sacrifice, that *taketh away the sins of the world*. But he is not only the sacrifice; he is also the sacrificer, the Priest of whom Aaron is a faint and imperfect type, since *by his own blood he has obtained eternal redemption*, and entered not for a season the holy of holies, but heaven; there to remain for ever at the right hand of God, *a Priest upon his throne*, to plead the merits of his one sacrifice of himself, and to make intercession.

A service of this description required numerous ministers^e. It was originally the privilege of the first-born; but when it pleased the Almighty to separate to himself a peculiar people, and to institute a particular form of worship, he

^z Ps. li. 7.

^a 1 John i. 7.

^b Heb. x. 9.

^c Isa. liii. 10.

^d Eph. v. 2.

^e Heb. x. 4.

set apart the tribe of Levi. Its members were in consequence exempt from secular occupations and cares, and were maintained by tithes and first fruits, paid by the other tribes, and by their share of the offerings: but they only filled subordinate offices; as preparing sacrifices, and acting as porters and singers, for they were a gift to Aaron and his sons, to whom they themselves paid tithes. They amounted to 38,000 in the time of David, who appointed 24,000 of them to the constant duty of the Temple, and they, as well as the priests, were divided into twenty-four courses, to officiate in turn: the others were distributed through the country as judges and officers. The priesthood was confined to the family of Aaron, and the office was to be hereditary. As the Jewish priests were expected to marry, it is most extraordinary that the Church of Rome, which maintains that the clergy are priests in the original sense of the word, to offer continually the body of Christ, should, in opposition as it were to the Law, insist upon their celibacy. Under the Mosaic dispensation, there were *many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death*^f. Horne gives a catalogue of them, eighty-one in number from Aaron to Phannias, who was appointed in the year in which the Temple was destroyed. The office descended from Aaron to Eleazar, his eldest surviving son, in whose family it continued six generations, when it passed over, we do not know for what reason, to Eli, who was of the house of Ithamar, Aaron's youngest son. The removal of the office from his family was foretold to him as a judgment on him for his criminal forbearance towards his sons; and it was fulfilled when Solomon took it from Abiathar his descendant in the fourth generation, and conferred it upon Zadok of the elder branch, of which was Joshua, high priest on the return from Babylon. It was held by his descendants till the time of Judas Maccabæus,

^f Heb. vii. 23.

who conferred it on one Alchimus, to the exclusion of the right heir Onias, who retired to Heliopolis in Egypt, where he erected a rival temple. Jonathan, his brother, united it with the sovereignty, and after Onias, he may be supposed to have had the best claim to the office, as being of the first of the twenty-four classes appointed by David. After the extinction of his family it might be considered as open to the whole priesthood: and Herod, and after him the Romans, nominated whom they pleased, with little regard to qualification. It was even sometimes sold to the highest bidder, and conferred and taken away at pleasure; and this explains the existence of more high priests than one at a time, that is, of men, who, having held the office for a season, retained the rank and title for life. Annas held it for six years, a longer period than any of his immediate predecessors, and when deposed, was succeeded by several of his sons-in-law, one of whom was Caiaphas. The high priest had the supreme administration in religion, and ranked next to the sovereign, and the other priests performed the service of the Temple under his superintendence. As only four of their original courses returned from the captivity, these were again divided into twenty-four, which bore the names of those established by David; and this explains Luke's naming the course of Abia, though it appears to have remained in Babylon^g. To each order was assigned a president, supposed to be the chief priest mentioned in the New Testament, and by Josephus. The duty, when we consider the multitude of sacrifices offered by individuals as well as for the nation, must have been laborious, but it was divided among many, and each course served only for a week at a time.

To the Temple it was the duty of all the men of Israel to repair at the three great festivals. Still the sabbath was sacred every where, and it was proper that then, and on

^g 1 Chron. xxiv. Ezra ii. Nehemiah vii. xii.

other days, Jehovah should be worshipped by his people when not in Jerusalem. Accordingly there were throughout the country, and wherever Jews were settled, and probably had been from their taking possession of Canaan, places whither they resorted to pray, and to hear the Scriptures read and expounded. These houses of prayer we call by the greek term *Synagogues*, or places of assembly; and they were opened for service on the Sabbath, Mondays, and Thursdays, and three times in the day; for, after the example of David^h and Danielⁱ, devout Jews prayed thus often, either in public or at home. In the synagogue was a table upon which the Law was spread, and on the east side an Ark in which it was kept; and the seats nearest this being the most honourable, were those which the Pharisees were ambitious of occupying^k. The direction of the service was under the management of rulers, *Ἀρχισυνάγωγοι*^l, who seem to have acted as judges in differences between the members of their congregations; and St. Paul is thought to allude to this custom^m, when he reproaches the Christians of Corinth with bringing their differences before Gentile tribunals, instead of appointing some of their own body to judge between the brethren. Our Saviour refers to their power of scourgingⁿ, which Paul five times experienced^o. The lessons at first were exclusively taken out of the Law, which was divided into as many sections as could be read through within the year. But when Antiochus Epiphanes forbad this custom upon pain of death, the Jews selected fifty-four portions out of the other books; and though on the ceasing of his persecution they resumed the reading of the Law, they also retained this innovation. The practice still prevails among them in their dispersion, and probably suggested the introduction into our own service of a chapter

^h Ps. lv. 17. ⁱ Dan. iv. 10. ^k Matt. xxiii. 6. ^l Acts xiii. 15. Mark v. 22. John vi. 59. ^m 1 Cor. vi. 9. ⁿ Matt. x. 17. ^o 2 Cor. xi. 24.

both from the Old and the New Testament. Both the Spanish and the German synagogues use a complicated liturgy, in which are interspersed the eighteen ancient prayers, to the repetition of which they are indispensably bound either in public or private^p. These are ascribed to Ezra, but some were evidently composed when there was neither temple nor sacrifice; and there is a nineteenth, said to have been written by Gamaliel a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, which is an imprecation on apostates and heretics, that is, Christians, and on the kingdom of pride, that is, the Roman empire.

It was in this holy land that it pleased Almighty Wisdom that the Saviour of mankind should be born, should pass his life, and should suffer the cruel and ignominious death of a malefactor. It occupied an intermediate station between the two grand divisions of the world, the Roman and Parthian empires, and was most favourably situated for communication with both. It was with a view to this most important of all events, that more than nineteen centuries before, Abraham had been called to sojourn in it from beyond the Euphrates; and the possession of it, promised to himself and his immediate descendants, was granted after five centuries to his seed, then grown into a mighty nation. All that had access to the Scriptures might learn from them, that this was^q the peculiar country of the Son of God, designated by Isaiah^r as *Immanuel's land*; not only as the abode of his chosen people, but because he himself, as this appellation, *God with us*, denotes, was there to become incarnate, as a descendant, through his mother, of its ancient sovereign David. There accordingly, in the fulness of time, he was born, as had been expressly foretold by Micah^s, in the town of his royal ancestor. From the

^p They may be read in Prideaux's Connection, vol. i. p. 374. or in Horne's Introduction.

^q John i. 11.

^r Isa. viii. 8.

^s Micah v. 2.

moment the first man became a sinner, this incarnation and its consequences became necessary to the restoration of the human race from guilt and misery, to the Divine image, and to the Divine favour; and as this fall had been foreseen and the remedy provided from the beginning, Christ is said *to have been slain* (that is, his sacrifice had been proposed and accepted) *before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times*^t. That season did not arrive till mankind had existed four thousand years, by which time the gross ignorance of religious truth, and the profligacy that had all along prevailed among all heathen nations, had abundantly demonstrated the insufficiency of what is called the Light of Nature, and the necessity, which indeed the wisest of their authors had acknowledged, of a Revelation of the Divine will. Nor did the sins of the only people which enjoyed this advantage, less evince the need of a spiritual Deliverer; for if the Gentiles were perishing *for lack of knowledge*, the Israelites, who boasted of a law that was *holy, just, and good*, were, through breaking of that law, self-condemned, and dishonoured God. The *Consolation of Israel*^u, as Luke emphatically calls our blessed Lord, had been held forth to the eye of faith from the beginning, in the whole ritual of their worship; the sacrifices and purifications of which were to the spiritually minded, a prophetic anticipated Gospel; intimating most significantly the necessity both of Justification through the atoning blood, not of animals, but of this Lamb of God; and of Sanctification, or the cleansing of the heart, by the Holy Spirit.

These details, which were necessary for the information of the Israelites, have to us no longer *any glory on account of the glory that excelleth*; and happily such twilight views are not needed by those upon whom *the Sun of righteousness has risen*. To such, these parts of the Bible are chiefly useful, as explaining and justifying the ceremonial law; but probably they were the most edifying to those who could only

^t 1 Peter i. 10.

^u Luke ii. 24.

see as *through a glass darkly* the blessing derived from a future Saviour. Romaine, impressed with this idea, has called what is perhaps to us the least interesting book, “the Gospel according to Leviticus;” a thought in which he has been anticipated by St. Jerome, who declares^w that almost every syllable in it breathes a spiritual mystery, because its figures lead us to Christ, the High Priest of the new covenant. In harmony with them, Cowper, in verse, expresses the same sentiments^x.

Israel, in ancient days,
Not only had a view
Of Sinai in a blaze,
But learn'd the Gospel too:
The types and figures were a glass,
In which they saw a Saviour's face.
The paschal sacrifice,
And blood-besprinkled door,
Seen with enlighten'd eyes,
And once applied with power,
Would teach the need of other blood,
To reconcile an angry God.
The lamb, the dove, set forth
His perfect innocence,
Whose blood of matchless worth
Should be the soul's defence;
For he who can for sin atone,
Should have no failings of his own.
The scape-goat on his head
The people's trespass bore,
And to the desert led,
Was to be seen no more:
In him our Surety seemed to say,
Behold, I bear your sins away, &c.

And in the spirit in which Cowper has explained the type of the sacrifices, his associate in this work illustrates that of the sacrificer, through whom

the eye of faith descries
A greater Priest than he:
Thus Jesus pleads above the skies
For you, my friends, and me,

^w Epist. ad Paulinam.

^x Olney Hymns, i. 132.

He bears the names of all the saints
 Deep on his heart engraved,
 Attentive to the state and wants
 Of all, his love has saved.
 In him a holiness complete,
 Light (Urim) and Perfections (Thummim) shine,
 And wisdom, grace, and glory meet,
 A Saviour, all divine !
 The blood, which as a Priest he bears
 For sinners, is his own ;
 The incense of his prayers and tears
 Perfumes the holy throne.

It is most interesting to see, by the light reflected from the epistle to the Hebrews, that Moses in this ritual wrote as certainly of Christ, as in the express predictions which he has recorded: and this wonderful adaptation, even in the minutest particulars, of the old dispensation to the new, affords to us the most convincing proof, that both had the same, and that a divine, original. The study of the Law ought to strengthen the faith of the Christian, and at the same time to call forth his gratitude, both for his freedom from its yoke, and his fuller insight into its meaning. Agreeing in that meaning as exhibited in these hymns, he will adopt as his own the conclusion of the former;

O grant that I may faithful be
 To clearer light vouchsaf'd to me.

Not presuming to *repeat*, but gratefully *commemorating* Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice, offered once for all upon the cross, let us present ourselves through him to God, which is *our reasonable service*. Never may we forget, that *unto them that look for him, he shall appear the second time without a sin-offering unto salvation*. Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest place through the blood of Jesus, let us draw nigh to his Father, and to our Father, who, in consequence of this sacrifice of his beloved Son, is *faithful and just*, as well as merciful to *forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*.

Not only the ceremonies of the Law and the Temple itself, but persons who lived under this dispensation, and the events of Jewish history, and even Patriarchal, are typical. We know from our Saviour, that the manna and the brasen serpent were emblems of him. We know also, on the authority of his Apostle Paul^y, that *the rock that followed the Israelites was*, that is represented, *Christ*; and it is reasonable to conclude, not with some, who are disgusted with the abuse of the doctrine, that there are no types except those cited as such in the New Testament; but that the few it expressly sanctions are meant as it were to put into our hands a key to unlock the hidden meaning of others. Thus the Patriarch Joseph is never named as typical of the Saviour; yet so numerous are the points of resemblance between them which Rollin^z has brought together, that we can hardly doubt that the former was designed to prefigure the latter. We may also observe, that there are types, which being granted require the admission of others. Thus Joshua, ordained by God to put the Israelites into possession of the promised land, is allowed to be a type of the great Captain of our spiritual salvation. The land consequently into which the former led the real Israel, must adumbrate the inheritance gained by the latter for the Israel of God; and its appellation familiar to Christian ears, “the heavenly Canaan,” shows that this type is generally admitted. This acknowledged, the water of baptism becomes an antitype of the Red Sea; and we shall find in the wanderings and battles of God’s ancient people, a figure of the sufferings and contests of the Christian’s pilgrimage. The Law, which was not restricted to the service of the temple, but was purposely connected with all the business and amusement of life, was a standing prophecy, well fitted to keep up in the mind of the spiritual worshipper a due sense of the sinfulness which required continual sacrifices

^y 1 Cor. x. 4.

^z Belles Lettres, iv. 2.

and purifications, and an earnest looking for the expiation and sanctification which they prefigured^a. St. Paul assures us, that *the things which happened to them in figures, were written for our example*; but we must beware of overlooking in the spiritual, the literal sense. We may, like St. Paul^b, *allegorize* the history of Sarah and Hagar, but we must not, as Bishop Marsh observes in his Lectures on Divinity, turn them into an *allegory*. We must also recollect, that spiritual interpretation is not for the conviction of unbelievers, but for the edification of the faithful. Some of these resemblances may edify a devout reader, who will in vain endeavour to convey his impression to one of a less lively imagination; and all types that do not rest upon inspired authority may be disputed. The pressing of such too far perhaps by the fathers, and by Cocceius and his school, has produced an injurious reaction. When, therefore, the doctrine of types is brought forward, not for edification, but as a branch of evidence, it will be more prudent to confine our proof to those that can be established from the New Testament.

SECTION IX.

A summary of the predictions of the Saviour from the Fall to the close of ancient Prophecy.

When the fulness of time was come, says the Apostle^c, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the Law to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. The passage suggests many ideas, and we perceive at once that we cannot enter into the spirit of it without some knowledge both of the Law designed to be, as he had before observed, *a school-master to bring us unto Christ*, and of the long period of

^a 1 Cor. x.

^b Gal. iv.

^c Gal. iv. 4.

comparative darkness which had preceded the birth of this promised Deliverer from sin and misery. Some may say, that having the gospels, we have no need to have recourse to the law and the prophets; for the dawn, bright as it is to those emerging out of darkness, seems but as the darkness to those who enjoy the light and warmth of a meridian sun. Still those to whom Christ is precious will be glad to trace him wherever he can be found, and their faith will be strengthened, and in a degree enlightened, by the search, and in a review of the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, they will be brought gratefully to feel their privilege of seeing what kings and righteous men of old longed in vain to see, and of having a clear distinct view of the fundamental truths of Christianity, and of all their important consequences, in the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, which were only shadowed forth in the Law, and obscurely foretold by the Prophets. To the slight sketch which I have given of the Mosaic Ritual, I therefore append this brief review of the predictions of the promised Deliverer, which become more distinct and definite, each adding some particulars, till the dawn as it were begins to scatter the darkness before the rising of the Sun of righteousness with healing in his rays. A Deliverer had been obscurely promised to our progenitors in the condemnation of their tempter, to preserve them from despair before sentence was pronounced upon themselves; and the promise was expressed in such general terms, that from Eve's speech on the birth of her first-born, she perhaps supposed that it was then granted; and indeed the Seed of Woman might have been expected by herself, or afterwards by any of her daughters, before its limitation to the family of Abraham. The descendants of Noah seem to have soon lost the knowledge of the true God; and the whole human race would have sunk into idolatry, had it not pleased the Governor of the world to call out of *the east a righteous man*, whom he condescended to call his *friend*, that he might form out of

him a people, who should continue amid heathen darkness to keep up the knowledge of him and of his will. During a long life, the faith of Abraham was exposed to a variety of trials; and its strength and continuance, even under the most adverse conceivable circumstances, well entitles him to be called the *father of all them that believe*. The inducement to him to leave his country and his father's house was the promise that God would make of him a great nation; and to this assurance of temporal prosperity was added in obscurer language the spiritual blessing, *in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed*^d. His crowning act of faith was his offering up at God's command his only son, in whom the seed was promised, (which seed, the Apostle informs the Galatians^e, was Christ,) *accounting that he was able to raise him up even from the dead*^f; and his faith was his own *exceeding great reward*: for his wish to see the day of Christ was gratified, we may presume, when Jehovah stayed his uplifted hand, and might explain to him the hidden meaning of substituting as victim the ram for Isaac. The promise was now confirmed by an oath, and Abraham enjoyed by anticipation not only his own eternal inheritance, but the honour and happiness of being the channel of the blessing to all who are saved, that is, of all who possess his faith.

Abraham had only one son, in whom *his seed was called*, but that son had two, and the blessing was conveyed to Jacob by the declared will of God, though contrary to their father's wish. Jacob has as many as twelve, it was therefore to restrict this Seed of Woman to one of them, that the dying patriarch^g was inspired to assign both sovereignty and the spiritual blessing to the fourth, Judah. Having declared that his other sons shall bow down to him, he foretels the duration of this supremacy:

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,

^d Gen. xii. 3. ^e Gal. iii. 16. ^f Heb xi. 19. ^g Gen. xlix. 10.

*Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
Until Shiloh come;*

And [unto] to him shall be a gathering of the peoples,
that is, Gentiles as well as Jews. Our version has retained the original word, because there is a diversity of opinion as to its proper translation. The Septuagint renders it, Him to whom it (that is, the sovereignty) belongs. Some, the Peaceable equivalent to Isaiah's *Prince of peace*^h. The Vulgate, He who is to be sent, that is, the Apostle. Our Lord says of himself repeatedly, that he has been sent forth; and he is called in the epistle to the Hebrews, *the Apostle* as well as *the High Priest of our profession*ⁱ. Moses might have alluded to this title, when, declining the mission to Pharaoh, he said, *O my Lord, send I pray thee by the hand of him whom thou wilt send*^k. The prediction proceeds:

*(He) binding his foal to the vine,
Even his ass's colt to the vine of Sorek,
Shall wash his garments in wine,
And his clothes in the blood of grapes.*

We who live after our Lord's first coming, may descry in this description of the vineyard of Judah, an allusion to the ass on which the Messiah rode to take possession of his temple; and the concluding verses may refer to his punishing his enemies at "his second coming in glorious majesty," and reminds us of his treading the wine-press alone, when *the day of vengeance is in his heart, and the year of his redeemed is come*^l; and of the description in the Apocalypse, *he was clad in a garment dipped in blood, and himself treadeth the wine vat of the wrath and indignation of Almighty God*^m.

A long interval of silence occurs, during which Israel had grown up from a family into a nation, which God had brought with a mighty hand out of Egypt, and tried and trained for forty years in the wilderness, that he might

^h Isa. ix. 6.

ⁱ Heb. iii. 1.

^k Exod. iv. 13.

^l Isa. lxiii. 3, 4.

^m Rev. xix. 11—15.

serve him in the promised land. On their emerging from the desert, they were driven by the obstinacy of Sihon, king of the Amorites, to attack and subdue him; and the king of Moab was alarmed at the approach of a host, which, as he said to the elders of Midian, would devour them, as the *ox licketh up the grass*. Open opposition after the conquest of the dominions of Sihon and of the king of Bashan seemed hopeless; they therefore agreed to call in the aid of Balaam, a prophet, who lived in the country from which Abraham originally came, and inconsistently united divination with a profession of true religion; for we know, from his answer to an enquiry of this same king, *wherewith shall I come before the Lord?* that he knew as well as Micah who preserves it", or any of the prophets of Israel, that justice, mercy, and humble obedience to God, were esteemed by him far more than the most costly and self-denying sacrifices. He is a melancholy instance of a prophet whose creed was right, while his conduct was sinful. He acted against his conscience, from his love of the wages of unrighteousness, and longed to die like the righteous, though he would not live their life. Rebuked as he had been by *the dumb ass speaking with man's voice*, he warned the king of Moab that he could only speak what God put into his mouth. That speech was indeed most dispiriting, for, as Balak reproached him, instead of cursing his enemies, *he had blessed them altogether*. He bursts forth into admiration of the innumerable family of Abraham, specifying the peculiarity of its lot, alike in prosperity and adversity, and still to this day the same, that Israel shall dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations. The king was so infatuated as to hope, that the prediction might be altered by a change of place in the prophet, so that he should not see all the *goodly tents* of Jacob. Balak, though assured that there is no enchant-

" Micah vi. 6.

ment that can prevail against Israel, still clings to hope, and brings Balaam to sacrifice on another mountain. But his importunity only aggravated his mortification, since the prophecy of the prosperity and glory of Israel becomes more explicit; Balaam exclaiming^o,

His king shall be higher than Agag,

And his kingdom shall be exalted.

Balak, in a passion, drove the seer from his presence, and he withdrew; yet not before the Spirit constrained him to foretel in these memorable words the future King of Israel;

I shall see him, but not now;

I shall behold him, but not nigh;

There shall come a Star out of Jacob,

And a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel.

Our Lord, when he appeared in majesty to John in Patmos, assumed among other titles that of *the bright and morning Star*; and so familiar had the image become to the nation, that Barkokab, Son of the Star, was the appellation assumed by the pretended Messiah, who stirred up under the Emperor Hadrian so formidable a rebellion; and it may be that a remembrance of this prophecy confirmed the faith of the Magi, and encouraged them to undertake their journey in quest of the new-born King of the Jews.

Jesus said to the Jews, *Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me^p*; and it is likely that he wished to draw their attention to that passage in the recapitulation of the Law, in which, after condemning as an abomination all attempts to pry into futurity, by consulting enchanters and diviners, he assures the Israelites, that the wish they had expressed at Horeb, that God would no more speak unto them in person, should be granted; for the Lord said unto him, *They have well spoken; I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words into his mouth, and whosoever will not hearken,*

^o Numbers xxiii.

^p John v. 46.

I will require it of him^a. Some modern Jews apply this to Joshua, but they are contradicted by the observation in the last chapter, that there was not a prophet like Moses whom God knew face to face; and when he appointed him his successor he said, that when he required counsel, he was to stand before the high priest^r. His mission was no more than to take possession of the promised land, for Jehovah being the King as well as the God of Israel, he had not, like Moses, a successor in his office; but the nation continued a federative republic under the independent administration of its tribes: and it was only when enslaved by foreigners, as the Midianites or the Philistines, that Judges were from time to time raised *to them to fight the armies of the aliens*. During this period of about five centuries, till it pleased God to suffer them to imitate the nations around them by adopting a monarchical form of government, *there was no open vision*; and one intimation alone of the future hope of Israel was vouchsafed, and that was to Hannah, who, her petition having been granted, thus concluded her thanksgiving for the birth of her son Samuel^s,

He (Jehovah) shall give strength unto his King,

And exalt the horn of his Messiah, (that is, Anointed,) proclaiming for the first time the significant title which occurs so frequently in subsequent predictions.

The Seed of the Woman is now limited to a single family in the tribe of Judah; for to David, as Peter avowed on the day of Pentecost, *God had sworn with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne*^t. That sweet Psalmist of Israel is continually describing his sovereignty in the most magnificent terms, not limiting it to his own people, but foretelling, that

All kings shall fall down before him,

All nations shall serve him^u:

^a Deut. xviii. 15.

^r Numb. xxvii. 21.

^s 1 Sam. ii. 10.

^t Acts ii. 30.

^u Ps. lxxii. 4.

nor to the longest period of the most aged monarch, but

As long as the sun and moon endure,

Throughout all generations^x.

In the reign of his descendant Ahaz, when Jehovah *had brought Israel low because of him*, and, humanly speaking, the sovereignty was about to be snatched from him by the confederate kings of Israel and Syria; then Isaiah had a commission to assure him of the continuance of his house till the birth of Messiah, whom he designates as *Emanuel*, the incarnate God, and for the first time announced his future miraculous conception. And lest the predictions of this eternal and triumphant reign should justify those, who, confounding his first and second advent, anticipated a worldly conqueror, he is described by the psalmist and the prophets as a *meek and lowly king*; as *feeding his flock as a shepherd*; as one who *will not bruise the broken reed, nor quench the smoking flax*; as *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*. And not only is his character delineated, but the particulars of his ministry and death, his condemnation as a malefactor, the insults as well as the sufferings which he endured, his honourable interment, and his victory over the grave, are so vividly pourtrayed, that they have rather the appearance of past history than of prophecy; and Micah^y, the contemporary of Isaiah, goes so far as to fix the birth-place of this Ruler of Israel.

During the captivity in Babylon, the hopes of Israel were sustained by three prophets. Jeremiah continued to combine with the fate of the neighbouring nations the reign of *Jehovah in righteousness, who shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land*. Ezekiel, an exile on the banks of Chebar, comforted the children of Israel with the promise, that they will be again made one nation in their own land, and that David (in his seed) should be their Prince for ever^z. While the period obscurely foretold by Jacob is so clearly

^x Ps. lxxii. 5.

^y Micah v. 2.

^z Ezek. xxxvii. 24.

fixed by the chronological prophecy of the greatly beloved Daniel^a, that it is not surprising that as the time drew nigh, those who searched the Scriptures were looking for redemption in Israel. Again, on the publishing of the gracious decree of Cyrus, which restored all who were willing to their own land, Haggai and Zechariah were raised up to encourage them in completing the new temple. The first, to console the aged survivors, who wept on account of its inferiority to that of Solomon, was inspired to say, that

The Desire of all nations shall come,

And I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts^b. And the second, adopting Isaiah's title^c, called this descendant from Jesse, *the Branch*; and following out the Psalmist's prediction of his priesthood after the order of Melchizedech, announced,

He shall be a Priest upon his throne^d.

He afterwards describes his triumphant entry into Jerusalem as her King:

Just and a Saviour^e;

Lowly, and sitting upon an ass,

Even upon a colt, the foal of an ass.

And completes his picture with specifying the thirty pieces of silver;

The goodly price

At which he was valued^f.

And shows that in all particulars, *both gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together for to do what God's hand and counsel determined before to be done*, by exclaiming,

Awake against my Shepherd^g,

And against the man who is my associate, saith the Lord of Hosts.

^a Dan. ix.

^b Haggai ii. 7.

^c Zechariah iii. 8.

Isaiah xi. 1. ^d Zech. vi. 13. ^e Zech. ix. 9. ^f Zech. xi. 13.

^g Zech. xiii. 7.

This long series of prophecies terminates with Malachi, who says of the Lord whom they seek,

He shall suddenly come to his Temple,

Even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in^h.

And he also announced, that

*Before the coming of the great and terrible day of Jehovah,
I will send you Elijah the prophet,*

*And he shall turn the heart of the fathers towards the
children,*

And the heart of the children towards the fathers.

And he charged them to *remember the law of Moses*, for till this messenger arrived there would be no other guide and instructor.

Thus during a succession of ages, prophet after prophet has added a touch till the original sketch has become a finished portrait, to which no pretender can counterfeit a likeness, and which represents in every feature the Son of Mary, and him alone. We may therefore confidently express ourselves in the words of Philip to Nathanael, *We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write*: and if the enquirer should like him object, *can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* we may invite him to come and see; and if he be indeed like him without guile, he will like him be constrained to reply, *Jesus is the Son of God, the King of Israel.*

SECTION X.

On the political state of Judæa at the birth of Jesus Christ.

THE birth of this blessed King of kings, for whom the whole series of events from the beginning was preparatory, was reserved for a period of universal peace, when David's sceptre had passed into the hands of a stranger; for Herod,

^h Malachi iii. 1.

while in religion a Jew, was a descendant of Esau; and though a king, reigned only by the permission of Augustus, whose empire comprehended all the world to the west of Judæa. The sovereignty had for near six centuries departed from the house of David. His lineal descendant Zorobabel had been placed by Cyrus over the Jews, but without the title of king, when he permitted them to return from their captivity; nothing is recorded concerning his sons; and after the extraordinary commission to Nehemiah had expired, (B. C. 420.) the nation was governed by the high priests, but as the subjects first of the Persian monarchs, and then of Alexander and his successors. They were dependent on the kings of Egypt or Syria, as the armies of either prevailed, till the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes, who proscribed their religion, (B. C. 175.) drove them into rebellion. Mattathias, a priest of Modin, being invited by the king's commissioner to set the example of sacrificing to idols, slew, with the zeal of Phineas, both him and a Jew who was about to comply with the command. He destroyed the altar, and, calling upon all who were faithful to the covenant to follow him, fled with his five sons into the mountains. Here he was joined by many of his countrymen, and became the founder of a dynasty called Asmonæan, from the name of his grandfather, and Maccabean, from the initial letters of the sentence, *Who is like unto thee among the gods, Jehovah*^a, which are said to have been inscribed upon the banner of his son Judas. He died after a reign of a single year, and was succeeded in order by his three sons, who maintained the war twenty-six years with the kings of Syria, and in the end established the independence of their country, and aggrandised their family, by uniting in their persons the priesthood and the sovereignty. Their dynasty had reigned above a century, when the succession (B. C. 68.) being disputed

^a Exod. xv. 11.

between the second Hyrcanus and his younger brother Aristobulus, Pompey interfered, captured Jerusalem, and determined in favour of the elder. He was the last of the Asamonean princes, and Julius Cæsar continued him in the high-priesthood, when he transferred the civil government to Antipater, his minister, an Edomite, yet a proselyte, as his nation had embraced the law on submitting to the first Hyrcanus. To Herod, who was his son, (B. C. 47.) he assigned, at an early age, the government of Galilee. Mark Antony, with the consent of the Senate, afterwards made him king of Judæa; and he contrived on the fall of his patron to have his authority confirmed by Augustus. Herod was allied to the Maccabean sovereigns, by marriage with a granddaughter of Hyrcanus; and though he conformed to many heathen customs, kept up the Jewish polity and a nominal independence. He was enterprising and magnificent, building many cities, and laying out large sums on the restoration of the Temple. But his profuse expenditure led to oppression; he was designing, and was hated for his cruelty; and, knowing the weakness of his title to the crown, he was alarmed at the report of the birth of a King of the Jews, and did not scruple to order the massacre of all the male infants of Bethlehem, that the one who caused his uneasiness might not escape. He had as many as ten wives and a numerous family; but he had put to death three of his sons, two of whom were the children of the Maccabean Princess, and he divided his dominions between Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Philip, the two former of whom were born of the same mother. To Archelaus he assigned Judæa, Samaria, and Idumea, subject to the approbation of Augustus, who confirmed the appointment, though he refused him the title of king. Philip, whom Herod made tetrarch of Trachonitis, is represented by Josephus as an amiable prince, beloved by his subjects, whom he governed with mildness and equity. Herod Antipas,

who received Galilee and Peræa with the same title, is described as crafty, and our Saviour calls him a fox. He had married the daughter of Aretas, the king of a tribe of Arabs; but falling in love with Herodias, prevailed upon her, though both his niece and sister in law, to live with him. Herod Philip, her first husband, having been detected by his father in a conspiracy against him, was left in a private station. Their daughter Salome, whose dancing procured the Baptist's death, became afterwards the wife of Philip the tetrarch, who had no issue, and afterwards of her first cousin Aristobulus, the third brother of the younger Agrippa.

On the death of Herod, Joseph brought back from Egypt the infant Jesus and his mother, and being warned to avoid the dominions of Archelaus, returned to his former home, which was under the government of Herod the tetrarch. It was in his dominions that our Saviour chiefly lived; and the tetrarchy of Philip, which extended to the northern shores of the lake of Gennesaret, could at any time afford him a safe retreat from his enemies. The subjects of Archelaus complained of his tyranny to the emperor, and he was deposed and banished to Vienna in Gaul, in the tenth year of his reign, the one in which Jesus accompanied Joseph and Mary to his *Father's house*, the Temple, and the registering which had been made at his birth seems to have been then acted upon by the Roman governor. The dominions of Archelaus were reduced to a province, but being of small dimensions, consisting only of Judæa, Samaria, and Idumea, they were placed not like Syria under a legate, but under a procurator of no higher than equestrian rank, who was dependent upon the former. Pontius Pilatus, the fifth of them, whose government dates from the year preceding the Baptist's ministry, has obtained an awful celebrity by his official condemnation of *the Prince of life*. Both he and *Herod, who had gathered together against the Holy Child Jesus*^b, as

^b Acts iv. 27.

foretold by the Psalmist, were a few years after about the same time sent into exile, and are said to have perished by their own hands. He is described as cruel, unjust, and covetous; and he wantonly irritated the Jews by ordering, contrary to custom, that the Roman standards, so odious to them as objects of worship, should be brought into Jerusalem. After ten years, (A.D. 37.) he was sent to Rome by the legate of Syria, to answer for his slaughter of a multitude of Samaritans, who had peaceably assembled in the expectation of the coming of the Messiah. Tiberius had died before his arrival, but his successor banished him to Vienna in Gaul. The ruin of Herod was effected by the ambition of his wife; but she rejected the pardon which was offered her, to share his exile. His nephew and her brother, Herod Agrippa, the grandson of the Asmonæan Princess, was intimate with the new emperor. He had been imprisoned for expressing a wish for his predecessor's death; and Caius on his accession released him, and granted him Philip's tetrarchy, vacated by death, with the title of king. Herodias, envious of his superior dignity, persuaded her husband to repair to Rome, to solicit the same rank; but Agrippa sent letters which led to his banishment, and obtained for himself his dominions. Herod was first sent to Lyons, and then into Spain; and Claudius, who mainly owed to the younger Herod his recognition by the senate, rewarded him with the government of the whole country. He is praised by Josephus, but to Christians he is known as the first sovereign who persecuted the Church. The Apostle James *he killed with the sword*^c; Peter was delivered out of his hands only by miracle; and he would probably have proceeded in the same course, had it not pleased God to cut it short, for his impiety in accepting the idolatrous homage of his subjects, who, when he was celebrating games in honour of his patron, seated on a throne

^c Acts xii. 1.

in dazzling royal apparel, saluted him as a god. An angel struck him with a disease, and he died within a few days eaten of worms, acknowledging the justice of his punishment. He reigned only three years; and, on his death, all Judæa became again a Roman province, as his son was thought too young to succeed him. This son, the brother of Drusilla and Bernice, whom Paul almost persuaded to become a Christian, was afterwards appointed successor to his uncle the king of Chalcis, both in the administration of the Temple, and in his small dominions which were subsequently enlarged, first by a grant of Peræa, and then of Galilee. He was under the painful necessity of assisting in the subjugation of his country, and afterwards retired to Rome, where he lived to seventy years of age, having long survived the Jewish war, which he had endeavoured to prevent, and was the patron of Josephus, who records his testimony, with that of Vespasian and Titus, to the truth of his history. We learn from Juvenal, that he was suspected of an incestuous intercourse with Bernice, who was the widow of their uncle, the king of Chalcis, and was so fascinating, that Titus was desirous of making her his wife, and most unwillingly yielded his attachment to the feelings of the Romans, who, even if her character had been pure, would have been alienated by a marriage of their Emperor with a foreign queen. The other sister had abandoned her husband Azizus, king of Emesa, to marry that governor who felt terrified, not without cause, before Paul his prisoner, when he *reasoned of righteousness and temperance and judgment to come*, but it does not appear that she had been moved. Her son, by Felix, perished in the memorable eruption of Vesuvius, which destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum; and in him terminated, as far as we know, the family of Herod; for we read of no children of Agrippa, or of Bernice.

The Jewish war commenced A. D. 66, the year succeeding St. Paul's martyrdom; and ended after a desperate contest

of four years in the destruction of metropolis and temple, and the dispersion of the nation. The detailed narrative by Josephus of the horrors of the siege, abundantly confirms our Lord's description of *this great tribulation*; and as less than forty years intervened between the prediction and its fulfilment, many of his contemporaries must have lived to acknowledge its truth.

This slight sketch seemed desirable, to illustrate the difficulties of Christ's ministry, as enhanced by the temper of the times. In the days of the taxing, before his birth, Judas the Galilean rebelled, maintaining that the payment of tribute to Cæsar was treason to Jehovah, the true King of Israel; and although he and his followers perished, his principles survived him, and Christ himself speaks of *Galileans, whose blood Pilate had lately mingled with their sacrifices*. The state of the country was perturbed during his whole life; and it required all his wisdom to baffle the insidious attempts of his enemies to ensnare him, and of his admirers to force him to declare himself King. He, therefore, occasionally withdrew from public view, retiring into deserts; he never visited Cæsarea, the political capital, and Jericho only once, and attended but five feasts at Jerusalem. We understand from this perplexity of his position, why he so often veiled his meaning in parables, why he sometimes forbad those whom he had healed to make known their cures, and why he did not publicly announce himself as the Messiah till the hour of his suffering had arrived. When we recollect the view taken by the whole nation, whether friends or foes, of the worldly character of the Messiah's office, we perceive that the assumption of it would have been regarded as treason by the latter, and as a signal for revolt by the former.

LECTURES

ON

THE DIATESSARON.

PART I.

1. *Preface to St. Luke's Gospel*, 1—4.

THE writing of the Gospels was not the cause, but one of the effects, of belief in Christianity, since before the writing of any, it had been propagated beyond Judæa, by persons who had heard the discourses and seen the miracles of our Lord. The want of some permanent record of his mission would be every where generally felt; and as the events which distinguished it had not been *done in a corner*^a, as the Apostle Paul reminded the Jewish king in the presence of the representative of the Emperor, but before enemies as well as friends, the Gospels would never have been received as authentic memorials, if there were in any place persons able to disprove their contents. The Preface to that of St. Luke informs us, that *many had already taken in hand to set forth a narrative of those things that had been accomplished*^b; and from the addition, that they had been delivered by *eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word*, we may conclude that these accounts were substantially true, though not perhaps so complete as what Luke was able to supply, since without any further observation he adds, that

^a Acts xxvi. 26.

^b Campbell's version, *πεπληροφορημένων*: *surely believed*, Authorized Translation.

it seemed fit to him to follow their example. From this we learn, that, contrary to the assertion of modern infidels, the miracles of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ must have caused a great sensation throughout the empire, among Gentiles no less than Jews, and excited the desire of a more perfect knowledge of his life and doctrines. This may also be reasonably inferred from the dedication of his work to a person of rank, who had been already *orally instructed* in Christianity; for though Theophilus, Beloved of God, is a title suitable to every genuine believer, I cannot agree with the few commentators, who supposed it to be used by St. Luke in that sense. The fictitious characters in modern dialogues are often designated by such descriptive appellations; but the opinion that it is the real name of an individual, is more in harmony with the character of history and the simplicity of the writer. Probably he was a person who had been converted by Luke: but no tradition respecting his station and country having been preserved, it is useless to repeat the conjectures of commentators. If however, as we have observed, this gospel carries with it internal evidence of having been written for Gentiles, we may presume that Theophilus was one; and he must have been a person of consequence, for his title *Κεράτιστος*, *Most excellent*, does not refer to character but to rank, as it is given to the wicked governors Felix and Festus, and answers to Excellency, Grace, and similar honorary appellations of modern times. Nor should it surprise us, that a person of high rank was found in that age among the disciples of Jesus, when we remember King Agrippa's confession to Paul, *almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian*^c, and that Sergius Paulus, the Proconsul of Cyprus, was actually his convert. The use of the epithet both by Luke and Paul shows, that Christians who refuse to employ the customary complimentary phrases of their time are over scrupulous.

^c Acts xxvi. 28.

2. *The Pre-existence, Divinity, Incarnation, and Manifestation of the glory of the Logos, or only-begotten Son of God. St. John i. 1—18.*

St. Mark and St. John commence with the public ministry of the Messiah, St. Matthew and St. Luke supply an account of his birth and infancy; and the latter carries the reader a few months back to that of John the Baptist, who was sent to usher in this new dispensation. Their narratives are required to prove that the Messiah was, as predicted, David's Son, and to establish the important fact, that in his desire to ransom our fallen race, "he did not abhor the Virgin's womb," but was literally *born of a woman*^d; formed of her substance, without any human father; being neither, as the early heretics taught, an incorporeal phantom, nor, as affirmed by some in our days, a mere man, like the other descendants of Adam. The importance of the tenet of his miraculous conception is evinced, by its insertion in all the early Creeds; and certainly unless he had been "clearly void of sin both in his Flesh and in his Spirit, he could not have been the Lamb without spot, who by the sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world^e." Thus it was necessary that he should become the Son of God, even in his human nature; but we know that this title is his also, in the highest sense, and that "he was begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with him^f." We learn from Isaiah as interpreted by Matthew^g, that *he is God with us*; and the same passage in Micah^h, which foretells his birth, declares *his goings forth to have been from old, from everlasting*. His Divinity thus intimated in the Old Testament is assumed and argued from in the epistles, but the earlier Evangelists only lead us to infer it; we might therefore expect it to be

^d Gal. iv. 4.

^e Art. xv.

^f Art. ii.

^g Matt. vii. 17.

^h Micah v. 2.

explicitly announced in the opening of the supplementary gospel of the beloved disciple. Yet this declaration is not introduced, as might have been expected, in connection with his Incarnation, but with the testimony to his preeminence of the Baptist, who acknowledged that Jesus was before himself, not only in dignity, but in existence, which since he was born after him, must have been previous to his birth. As this Evangelist had been a disciple of the Baptist, he seems to have partaken of his master's anxiety to exalt the Lord, whom he had been sent to proclaim. Thus after declaring the Messiah to be the Light, he continues, *there was a man sent from God whose name was John, to bear witness concerning the Light*; and he carefully repeats, that Christ is *the Light, the real Light*. Our Lord confirms both these affirmations of his Apostle, for he calls the Baptist, *a burning and a shiningⁱ lamp*, not *light*, but *a light-bearerⁱ* (λύχνος) that illuminates one country, and but for a season; while of himself he says, *I am the Light (φῶς) of the world^k*, that is, the source from which all light has emanated, or, as the Evangelist expresses it, *the Light which lighteth every one coming into the world*.

To establish beyond all doubt the Messiah's superiority, St. John commences with his pre-existence and proper divinity; and his statement rises in dignity; for he states, first, that the Word existed in the beginning, then that it existed with God, lastly, that it is God. *In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*. In this brief yet comprehensive sentence, the inspired writer, by a simple statement of the orthodox faith, condemns the heretics of his own and future times. The Word was in the beginning, is an assertion incompatible with the creed of all who deny the pre-existence and the eternal filiation of the Son of God. The Evangelist does not say, as Moses did of the material world, that God

ⁱ Campbell's Version; Light, A. T.

^k John viii. 12.

created the Word, but that *the Word was*, that is, as St. Paul declares to the Colossians¹, *begotten before all creatures*^m, *before God's works of old, before ever the world was*ⁿ, as Solomon affirms of it under the kindred title of Wisdom; "begotten, not made," and therefore there never was, as the Arians maintained, a period when he was not; but he was co-eternal with the Father, "Light out of Light," as the ray beams forth^o from the sun^p, "bright effluence of bright essence increate." The Word was, not as an attribute *ἐν* in God, but as a person *πρὸς* with God. This marks the distinction of persons in the Deity, which the Sabellians confound; and that none may divide the substance, it is added, that the *Word was God*. This affirmation contradicts alike the Gnostic notion of his being an inferior emanation, and the modern heresy of his simple humanity; and, lest the reader should overlook the personal distinction while contemplating the Son's Divinity, the inspired writer repeats, *the Same was in the beginning with God*. "Let these words," therefore, says St. Basil^q, who as a Greek must have understood the force of Greek prepositions, "be impressed as a seal upon your memories, and confute with them the sophisms of those who maintain that Christ had no existence before his birth."

It is remarkable, that instead of the Son of God, the Evangelist here uses *Λόγος*, which our translators, retaining the theological language of the Western Church derived from the Latin translation of the Scriptures, render *Word*, obviously in a peculiar sense; for no one can think, as Eusebius observes, that God's Word is similar to a word composed of syllables. Our language cannot convey the

¹ Coloss. i. 15.

^m Waterland, in his *Sermons on Christ's Divinity*, p. 35. shows this to be the true translation.

ⁿ Prov. viii.

^o Brightness of his glory, A. T.

^p Heb. i. 3.

^q Hom. xvi.

double meaning of Logos, which signifies both the λόγος ἐνδιάνθρωπος and the λόγος προφορικὸς of the Stoics; that is, reason as it exists in the mind, *Thought*; or as embodied in sound^r, *Speech* or *Word*. Some translators, especially those who have a Socinian bias, prefer Reason, as more favourable to their view, but the majority render it *Word*; and there are theological writers, who, objecting to any translation as inadequate, retain the original. Either sense will suit the second Person of the Trinity, for he is both that wisdom which God *possessed in the beginning of his way*, as the human soul does its thoughts^s; and it is not only in *these last days that God hath spoken through his Son*^t, but he has ever been the revealer of his secrets^u. God the

^r Eusebius, Dem. Ev. v. 5. Lactantius notices the two significations as follows. "Sed melius Græci λόγον dicunt, quam nos Verbum sive Sermonem. Λόγος enim et sermonem significat, et rationem; quia ille est et vox, et sapientia Dei." De Ver. Sap. 9. Tertullian (Adv. Prax. 5.) prefers *ratio* to *sermo*; and yet says, we ascribe to the Logos a proper spiritual existence, and that it was put forth from God by generation. Beza and Erasmus translate it *sermo*. Dr. Burton's Bampton Lectures convey much information respecting the use of the term in Plato, Philo, and the Fathers.

^s Prov. viii. 22.

^t Heb. i. 2.

^u Dan. viii. 13. The reader, who turns to the Latin or English Bible, will not discern this title except in the margin of the latter. The etymology of the word *Palmuni*, and its close connection with that of *Pelah*, *Secret* or *Wonderful*, the title claimed by the Angel that appeared to Manoah, who, it is evident from the context, was Jehovah, and ascribed by Isaiah, (ix.) with others of the most exalted meaning, to the Child *to be born to us*, seems to justify this translation, which is adopted by Calvin and other approved commentators, and supported by the Targum. "This numberer of secrets, or wonderful numberer, must mean a person of extraordinary rank, as being able to unfold those secrets which are hid from other angels, and is therefore justly supposed to mean the Son of God, the wonderful Counsellor, as being acquainted with all God's designs." *Lowth*.

Father dwells *in unapproachable light, and him no man hath seen or can see*. The Logos, therefore, is the channel through which he has always communicated his will to mankind, from the time that the voice of Jehovah spoke to Adam in Paradise, till he assumed flesh as the Son of Mary. All the successive manifestations of Deity under the patriarchal dispensation, and those of the Angel of the Covenant to Moses, to Joshua, Gideon, Manoh, and others, were made by the second Person of the Trinity, and seemingly in the likeness of that nature, which he afterwards in reality assumed. This which is asserted by Justin Martyr^y, has been ever the received opinion of the Church. Indeed in many of these appearances it is demonstrated by the alternate use of the words Angel^z and God; and it is declared in this introduction that the Word *came to his own land, and his own people did not receive him*. It is lost sight of, however, by many modern divines, though a doctrine full of consolation; yet even the heathen had a glimpse of it; for Plato informs us, that all the commerce between God and man is carried on by Demons, (that is, subordinate deities,) who convey from men to God prayers, and from Gods to men commands or the rewards of sacrifices. Since we must choose between Reason and Word, I prefer the latter, as in all the instances in which it occurs in the gospels, it is used in this sense; and Archbishop Laurence^a observes, that the corresponding term in Hebrew and Chaldee will bear no other. Augustine says, the Son is called the Word of God, because his Father makes known his will by him in the same manner as a man makes known his mind by his words; and to this interpretation the Evangelist himself leads us, when he says, that *the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared [or explained] him*,

^y Dial. c. Tryph.

^z Joshua vi. 2. Hosea xii. 3—5. Judges xiii. 21, 22. vi. 11. 14.

^a Dissertation upon the Logos, p. 43.

that is, both his nature and his will. The abstract is to be taken for the concrete, by an idiom common in the New Testament: thus, salvation stands for saviour; and speech being equivalent to speaker, Word stands for that oracle or interpreter of the divine counsels, *who speaketh the words of God*^b.

Logos, in the sense in which it occurs in this Introduction, is used by the same author in the opening of his first epistle, in which, being as anxious to establish his Master's humanity as here his divinity, he speaks of hearing, seeing, and handling the Word of life; and he employs it as one of the titles of the triumphant Saviour, where he describes him as riding on a white horse, *in righteousness to judge, and to make war*^c, in a sublime passage, which bears a striking resemblance to one in Solomon's Wisdom^d, in which the Logos is described as a fierce Warrior with a sharp sword, leaping from heaven out of the royal throne. The only instance of its use in this sense in another New Testament author, is perhaps in the prefatory sentence of Luke's Gospel, for *ministers and eye-witnesses* seem more appropriate to a living person than to a spoken word. The latter, however, best suits the context of St. James^e and of St. Peter^f, in which it occurs. A remarkable passage in the epistle to the Hebrews^g has been so applied by many commentators; and the application is plausible; but our faith in it is shaken by observing, that where St. Paul^h seems to personify the Word, by calling it *the sword of the Spirit*, he does not use this ambiguous term, but ῥῆμα, *rhema*, as if on purpose to prevent its application to the Son; and

^b John iii. 34. This interpretation is so satisfactory, that no other is needed, and therefore I should not have mentioned that of Laurentius Valla, that λόγος is put for λεγομένος, spoken of, or promised, if Tittman had not stated that it is approved by Ernesti.

^c Rev. xix. 11.

^d Wisdom xviii. 4.

^e James i. 18.

^f 1 Pet. i. 23.

^g Heb. iv. 12, 13.

^h Eph. vi. 7.

that when St. Peterⁱ speaks of *the word of God as sent to the children of Israel*, he employs them both, lest the reader should think of the personal Word. Logos, therefore, may be regarded as a term peculiar to St. John; and it is natural to enquire why he employed and whence he derived it. Bishop Pearson tells us, "that the doctrine of the Logos was the current interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures, and that the Targums, or Chaldee Paraphrases, which were read in the synagogues, taught the Jews of Palestine that God and the Word of God were the same; which explains why John delivered so great a mystery in so few sentences, as he spoke to those who understood him. The existence, nature, and operations of the Logos were allowed; its union with the man Jesus was the only point to be established." The Christian may learn from the introduction to this gospel, that the *Word* of the Lord, by whom the Psalmist^k declares that the heavens were made, was not a command, but a person; and it appears, that belief in a manifestation of the Deity, whether called Word, Son, or Angel, that is, Messenger, is the doctrine of the Old Testament; but the support which Pearson and others claim for this doctrine from the Targums is much weakened, on a minute examination, which shows that it is an idiom of the language in which they are written, to use the noun *Memra*, word, as a substitute for the emphatic pronoun self, of God or of man^l. Still it might, in conjunction with the Septuagint

ⁱ Acts x. 36.

^k Psalm xxxiii. 6.

^l Thus the Jerusalem Targum translates, (Exod. xix. 9.) the *Word* of Jah said to Moses, "Behold, my *Word* shall be revealed to thee in the thick cloud;" and this seems decisive; but it is equally applied to men, as another Targum renders Eccles. i. 2. Solomon said by his *Word*, "Vanity of vanities," and the application to the Messiah can be proved in no passage, and is in the following impossible. "Behold, my servant, the Messiah, I will draw near to him, my chosen, in whom my word hath delight." Isaiah xlii. 1. Dr. Pye Smith's Scripture Testimony to the Messiah, l. vii. 2.

version, originate the use of Logos in a personal sense, which, as appears from the Apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon^m, must have been prevalent among the Alexandrian Jews before the Christian æra. Celsus maintains it to be their opinion, that the Logos was the Son of God. This Origen denies, and concludes, that it was borrowed from Plato; but I apprehend that he adopted both the term and the doctrines connected with it from the East; and that Philo, combining his speculations with his own and with ancient traditions, gave to Logos a meaning approximating nearer to that of St. John, for Plato's idea answers better to Reason than to Speech. In Philo's numerous works, the titles and operations assigned to the Logos, bear a remarkable resemblance to those given to the Son of God, both by St. John and St. Paul, for it is described in them, as the instrument through which God has made and governed the world, and manifests himself; and he calls it the first-begotten Son of God, the divine, the eternal Word, the Image of God, the Beginning, the express Image of God's seal, the Angel, the Interpreter and the Representative of God. Still we can hardly imagine that his works were known to the Evangelist; but there were Gnostics at Ephesus, where he resided, who had given currency to the term, and it was desirable that he should silence their erroneous notions by a correct definition of it; and this opinion, suggested by Michaelis, and ably supported by Dr. Burton, is strengthened by the knowledge, that not only Logos, but Zoe, Alethia, Monogenes, Plenoma, that is, *Life, Truth, Only-begotten, Fulness*, which all occur in this introduction, were terms of Gnostic theology. In borrowing this term, it must have been the object of the Evangelist to restore it to its true meaning. According to the Gnostics, the Logos was only an inferior emanation; St. John shows, therefore, that it proceeded immediately

^m Wisdom xviii. 15.

from the Deity, and was itself God; that Life, Truth, and Only-begotten, were not other emanations, but only other names for the Logos; and that this Logos, the Creator of the world, became incarnate in Jesus the Son of Mary, and so became the Christ.

The *Word was made flesh*, but it retained the Divine nature, which enabled it to accomplish the great work which it had of its own accord undertaken. The Logos was perfect God, and perfect Man; for we are not to suppose that he had only a human body governed by the Deity, but it appears from his own declaration, *not my will but thine be done*, that he had a human soul, and indeed without one he would not have been a Man. Thus he is God and Man, united in one person, the difference between the two natures not being changed by their union. As such he differs from every other being, yet both natures were required by him as Mediator and Saviour, for it is upon this union, that the value of his sufferings depend. As man he could suffer, but not satisfy; as God he could satisfy, but not suffer. We must also remember that the Son of God did not take upon him our nature only to die: we know that he ascended with it into heaven, and that his godhead and manhood are never to be divided. How deep is the obligation of the human race to him, who, *passing by Angels*, came down from heaven for their salvation! May we duly feel this, and may our gratitude *constrain us to live to him who died for us!* There is then, and there ever will be, a Man in Heaven, and as Man the Governor of the Universe; and as he partook of human nature, so the Apostle Peter assures us that through his *great and precious promises, we may become partakers of the Divine nature*ⁿ.

Having affirmed the personality and divinity of the Logos, the Evangelist proceeds to declare, that through this agent, as the instrumental cause, all things and beings were

ⁿ 2 Pet. i. 4.

created, without a single exception. He adds, *in him was life, and he was the Light of men*; the author of their moral as well as their physical existence, of their mental as well as bodily powers; and that notwithstanding, this *Light shone in darkness* which it did not disperse. It was dimly seen, but by a distorted vision, by a few philosophers, but the heathen generally opened not their eyes to its beams as reflected from the objects which surrounded them, meditation on which might have enlightened them with some faint notion of their Maker. Even when he came as Man to his own peculiar country Israel, his own people, though they had been in various ways prepared for his coming, rejected him. Still his advent was not without its intended effect; there was both among Jews and Gentiles a *seed to serve him*, and *to as many as received him he gave the right^o of becoming the sons of God*, and consequently as sons, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with himself. The value of the privilege appears from the declaration, that it was obtained not through human agency, not by descent from any particular race, by natural birth, or by voluntary adoption, but by the good pleasure of our heavenly Father. He then shows, that those who rejected the Word were inexcusable; for he had the testimony first of the Baptist, and then of his own disciples, who proclaimed him to the world, and had *beheld his glory, the glory of the only-begotten Son*, not only in the miracles which he continually wrought, but visibly at his baptism, transfiguration, and ascension, for he *had been made flesh*, and *sojourned^p* among them, as Jehovah had dwelt within the tabernacle. This allusion leads the Evangelist to contrast the Law and the Gospel, the former as *given* through Moses as by a servant, the latter as *produced^a* through Jesus Christ as its author; the former was a favour, if the Jew be compared with the Gentile, but the latter is the *real favour*, which all Christians have received,

^o power, A. T.^p dwelt, A. T.^a came by.

instead of it, out of *his fulness*^r. And this, the Logos only could bestow, for, unlike men, he *is in the bosom of the Father*, and therefore, fully knowing his character and will, he *has declared him*. The doctrine with which St. John opens his Gospel, is established in the discourses which follow from the Logos himself; who repeats several of the dogmas here affirmed. Thus, in his prayer to his Father, he refers to the glory which he had with him before the world. He says, *he has life in himself, he is the light of the world, he is in heaven*, and that *God is his [own] Father*, and that he is not by adoption, but by nature, *his beloved*, that is, his only *Son*. And he confirmed his Apostle's affirmation, that he has *declared*, that is revealed, the invisible deity, when he answered Philip's request, *show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*^s. This Evangelist concludes his gospel with the declaration, that his object in writing was, that men *might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they might have life through his name*^t. The term Logos having been misapplied, the Evangelist probably on that account does not choose to use it any more, and not having been employed by other New Testament writers, it soon became obsolete among the orthodox. I say among the orthodox, for it must have continued in use among the heretics of the East, from whom Mahomet received it among their erroneous notions of Christianity, since it reappears in the Koran^u as one of the titles of the Messiah, and has therefore become familiar to all the intelligent professors of his religion.

3. *The Conception of Elisabeth.* Luke i. 1—23.

The canon of the Hebrew Scriptures closes with the de-

^r *Grace instead of grace*, is Chrysostom's interpretation, which the context I think proves to be the true one, and certainly gives a fuller and better sense than *grace upon grace*, A. T. that is, most abundant grace.

^s John xv. 8, 9.

^t John xx. 31.

^u Koran, iii. 45. iv. 107.

claration of Jehovah, that he will send *Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord*^v; and we learn from the infallible exposition of our Saviour, that his contemporaries, who understood the prediction literally, were mistaken in supposing that the Tishbite would return to life to announce his birth, and that it foretold, as explained by Gabriel to his future father, the coming of one *in the spirit and power* of that Reformer of Israel. Other revealers of the divine will had been raised up without previous notice, but the dignity of the Son required that he should be announced beforehand by a succession of prophets; and not only that he should be thus announced, but that a herald should proclaim his approach, and that the coming of this herald should be also predicted. This is a test of the Messiah, which it was impossible for any of the pretenders to that office to stand, for this herald must also assume a part, and must be content that it should be a subordinate one. *This messenger of the Lord, this voice*, as he is emphatically designated by Isaiah^x, was to be qualified for his office, even from his birth, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and was to be dedicated to God as a Nazarite, who was bound to abstain *from wine and strong drink*^y. He is called the Baptist, from the emblematical rite of baptism, with which he was *to make ready a people, prepared* for their incarnate God; and they, by their submission to this washing of the body, confessed that the subjects of the Redeemer were expected to be pure in heart. His ministry was to be successful; and therefore not only his father Zachariah, but many, *would rejoice at his birth*. The Messiah's forerunner was to be his kinsman after the flesh, and was to descend through both parents from the sacerdotal line, though his ministry was not to be in the temple, but in the wilderness: and his birth, though not strictly miraculous, was to be contrary to the ordinary course of nature. Zachariah and Elisabeth, his parents,

^v Malachi iv. 5, 6.^x Isaiah xl.^y Numbers vi. 3.

are characterized as *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*, that is, as far as is compatible with human infirmity; and as *both righteous before God*, that is, not in appearance, but in reality, since he knoweth the secrets of the heart. They had reached advanced age without issue, and the angel's address, *thy prayer is heard*, implied that Zachariah continued to pray for a child. It is observable, that though divorce was the common practice of his countrymen, and justified by their religious teachers, he had not married another wife.

As each class of priests consisted of many individuals, the several offices of the daily service were distributed among them by lot, and the most honourable of these, the offering incense upon the golden altar in the outer sanctuary at the time of the oblation, now fell to Zachariah. During this service, the congregation in the courts without was engaged in silent prayer. *Zachariah was not strong in faith*, like Abraham, who was *fully persuaded that what God had promised*, though seemingly impossible, *he was able to perform*. Not Isaac only, but other eminent Israelites, as Jacob, Samson, and Samuel, had been born of women who, like Elisabeth, had been regarded as barren. Notwithstanding, Zachariah staggered through unbelief at the promise of a son, which an angel was sent to announce to him, and required a sign, *how shall I know this?* The angel, who had declared that he should be the father of the second Elijah, who *should turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God*, now proclaimed himself to be Gabriel, the same who had revealed to Daniel² the date of the coming of *Messiah, the Prince*. His name should have predisposed him to believe, for none of the heavenly host could have been supposed so fit to announce that the time was about to be accomplished. But he asked for a sign, and it was granted in displeasure, for it was a manifest rebuke of his want of faith in the angel's word. He was struck with a

² Daniel ix.

temporary loss of hearing and speech, till the fulfilment of the promise. The congregation was waiting for Zachariah to dismiss them with the customary blessing, but when he came forth he could only intimate what had happened by his gestures. He was, however, able to go through his allotted ministration, and at the expiration of his week to return to his home in the hilly part of Judæa, supposed to have been Hebron.

4. *Gabriel's Salutation of the Virgin Mary.* Luke i. 26—38.

In the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy, the same angel was sent by God to Nazareth, to Miriam, or Mary, a virgin of the house of David, betrothed, but not yet married, to Joseph, a descendant of the same illustrious progenitor, and though in the humble occupation of a carpenter, the heir of his throne. He saluted her as *the most Blessed of women*^a, and *favoured* by the Lord, as chosen to be the mother of the Messiah; and he directed her to give the Babe the significant name of *Jesus*, or Saviour, declaring that *he shall sit on the throne of his father David*, and *reign*, not like his ancestors for a few years, but *for ever, over the house of Jacob*, assuring her in Isaiah's words, that *of his kingdom there should be no end*. We should not have been surprised if an unprecedented miracle, a Virgin's conception, should not have been credited by this young handmaid; but her reply, *how shall this be?* differs widely from *whereby shall I know this?* that of the aged priest, from whom we might have expected belief in a prediction, resembling that which had been fulfilled to his ancestor Abraham, and seems to have been the subject of his own prayers. His implies doubt, her's only seeks for direction. The angel, therefore, informs her, that she shall conceive through the immediate energy of the Holy Spirit, and gives her unasked, as a sign, the conception of her aged and hitherto barren cousin, Elisabeth, informing her, in the language of the Lord on a similar

^a *Blessed among women*, A. T.

occasion to Sarah, *that with God nothing is impossible*^b. Mary could not doubt that her pregnancy would subject her to reproach, yet without hesitation she implicitly resigned herself to the Divine will, saying, *Behold, I am the hand-maid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.*

5. *Mary visits her cousin Elisabeth.* Luke i. 39—56.

We may presume that the Virgin's anxiety to learn from Elisabeth herself her pregnancy, induced her to take a journey from Nazareth to Hebron, nearly the whole extent of the land. On her arrival she received full confirmation of her faith, for Elisabeth, to whom the secret of Mary's conception had been revealed, immediately greeted her by inspiration with the angel's salutation, as *Blessed above women*; and though her superior in age and station, she acknowledged it as a condescension in the future *mother of her Lord* to visit her, and gave proof of her own pregnancy by declaring, that no sooner had the *voice of Mary's salutation sounded in her ears, than the babe leaped in her womb for joy*. Probably her recollection of what her husband was now suffering for his want of faith, impelled her to utter, in commendation of her who had shown no doubt or misgiving, this truth of universal application, *Happy is she who believes*. The Virgin, encouraged by this address, broke forth into a hymn of praise. For four centuries prophecy had been mute, but as the *Glory of his people Israel* was about to appear, it again found a voice. The Virgin was inspired to *magnify Jehovah, and to rejoice in God her Saviour*, for the mercy showed unto herself; the father of the Baptist soon after blessed the Lord *for visiting and redeeming his people*; the heavenly host descended to sing at the birth of Him who is their Lord and ours; and Simeon closed these prophetic strains with his affecting farewell, satisfied to depart, since he had seen Him who is to be the Saviour of the Gentile as well as the Jew. These three preeminently Christian hymns are

^b Gen. xviii. 14.

familiar to us, from their introduction into our daily service. Taking them in their order, they gradually unfold the scheme of redemption. Thus Mary mentions only the birth of her Son, but the descent and power of this *Horn of salvation* are asserted by Zachariah; her declaration, that God *hath holpen Israel*, is by him expanded into a description of this salvation; and Simeon intimates, that it is to be extended to the Gentiles. The Virgin's hymn strikingly resembles that of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, the first who had given to the blessed fruit of Mary's womb the title of Messiah and King, a female being selected to offer up the first fruits of praise to the Seed of the Woman. We may remark in their songs this striking difference, that Hannah in the fulness of her triumph dwells on her aggrandisement, while Mary thinks of her poverty^c. To the angel she had declared her acquiescence in the Divine will; she now expresses in the most emphatic manner her exultation in God her Saviour, and assigns as the reason, that, passing by *the mighty and the rich*, he had selected her *of low degree* to be the mother of the Messiah. Her gratitude arises from reflection on the lowliness of her condition, not of her mind; and she advances no claim of superior virtue to entitle her to this distinction^d, but classing herself with all *who fear God*, regards her miraculous conception as an act of *mercy*. Her faith realizes what is yet future, and she foretells that the promise to Abraham is about to be fulfilled, and that Israel will be delivered by her Son. Viewing his birth as the cause of joy not to herself and her family alone, she declared that, in consequence of the miraculous interference of the Almighty, *all generations will henceforth esteem her happy*.

^c Jebb's Sacred Literature, sect. xx.

^d The *lowliness* of the Prayer Book translation, which is the rendering of the *humilitas* of the Vulgate, may suggest the consideration of her humility, which the original (not ταπεινοφροσύνη, but ταπείνωσις) does not support.

It is painful to think how many, not content to regard this handmaid of the Lord as the happiest, or the most blessed, of women, have exalted her to his throne, address her with titles which belong exclusively to the Deity, and invoke her aid in preference to that of her Son, expressly avowing their belief, that she partaking of their nature only, will be more touched than he can be with a feeling for their infirmities. The vow of Louis XIII. who placed France under her especial protection, was renewed by Louis XVIII. on his restoration: modern Roman divines worship her without using any terms to qualify their adoration; while the Spanish have raised her above human nature, maintaining as an article of faith her immaculate conception, and consequent freedom from original sin; and this tenet, which had only been encouraged by former Popes as a pious opinion, has been pronounced by the present an article of faith. Thus in an enlightened age, notwithstanding the continued protest of the reformed Churches, it is to be feared that Roman Catholics generally worship this handmaid of the Lord more frequently and more devoutly than her Maker; and we know that many among their most talented and learned authors address her, not as a subordinate mediator with her Son, but as the direct bestower of blessings, and reliever of distress. Trained as we have been in a better school of theology, we are amazed that any Christian should seek from a created being, blessings which the Creator alone is able, and has graciously promised, to bestow, or even solicit the intercession of saint or angel, when he is authorized to come *boldly to the throne of grace, through the Son of his love*, whom God is always disposed to hear. But we do not, I fear, feel sufficiently how such worship dishonours the Redeemer, by transferring his attributes to his servants, or lament as deeply as we ought, that so gross a delusion should fascinate so many persons, not merely of piety, but of powerful and cultivated understand-

ings. We hope that it is a delusion, more of the head than of the heart; still its effects must be pernicious, as in a greater or less degree it diverts the affections from him who ought to be their supreme object. The fact, while it should excite our pity and our prayers for those who are in so injurious an error, ought to impress us with gratitude to our heavenly Father, for the inestimable privileges which we enjoy as members of a Church, which has in all respects so faithfully reverted to Scripture, and has throughout her Liturgy embodied the important truth, that there is *but one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus*, who alone from his peculiar nature is able as well as willing to fulfil that office. It must surprise the Romanist, that the Virgin is so rarely mentioned in the Scriptures; and that on the two occasions which offer of magnifying her, her Son seems purposely to have designed to warn us from ascribing to her more honour than is due. The passage before us, which has led to this digression, contains the only commendation bestowed upon her, and this is heightened by a mistranslation, for the angel's salutation is in the Vulgate rendered, instead of *favoured*, full of grace, (*gratia plena*.) Thus attention is turned from the favour conferred of being selected to be the Messiah's mother, to the grace supposed to be inherent in her; and this salutation was by St. Dominic converted into an act of adoration, which in the devotion of the Rosary, in general use in the Church of Rome, is repeated a hundred and fifty times, while the Lord's Prayer is to be said only fifteen. This translation is obviously erroneous, and ours is confirmed by the Angel's subsequent explanation, *thou hast found favour with God*.

6. *The Birth of John the Baptist.* Luke i. 56—80.

Mary, after continuing with her cousin three months, returned home, and Elisabeth was in due time delivered of a son. On the eighth day after his birth, the appointed time

for circumcision, a large company assembled; and it being proposed to give him his father's name, his mother informed them that he was to be called *John*, that is, *God is favourable*, or *gracious*, a most appropriate appellation for him whose office it would be to proclaim the reign of grace, that is, favour. An appeal being made to his father, he wrote down his name, John, in obedience to the command of the angel; and having thereby acknowledged him as God's gift, the season of his correction expired, and he recovered his speech. Faith restored what incredulity had taken away; and his first employment of this recovered faculty, which he had abused by raising objections, is to praise God, *for visiting and redeeming his people*. His hymn commences, where the Virgin's ends, with the testimony of prophecy. Like her, he considers the reign of her Son, of whom he speaks as if already born, as the fulfilment of *the oath which he sware to their father Abraham*. He thanks God for the descent from David of this *Horn of salvation*; and combines, like the ancient prophets to whom he refers, with the anticipation of redemption *from the hand of all that hate them*, a spiritual deliverance, and the ability to serve God both in *holiness and in righteousness*. He then addresses his own infant as the Herald that was *to go before the face of Jehovah, to prepare his ways*; but returns again to the reign of the Messiah. Him he designates, in the language of the prophet whose name he bore, as^e the *Day-spring*, or *rising Sun*, referring also to Malachi's *Sun of Righteousness*^f; and while he characterises his sovereignty as connected with *peace*, and *the remission of sin*, he seems, in language imitated from Isaiah, to allude to the conversion of the heathen.

We do not know how long John's parents lived to superintend his education; but as he grew in age, he was prepared in solitude for his high and important destination, under the immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit; for he was neither

^e Zech. vi. 12.

^f Malachi iv. 2.

brought up by the scribes, nor attended in the temple, but *was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.* There he lived in great austerity, drinking no fermented liquor, and eating such food as the place afforded, *locusts and wild honey.* His clothing was the coarse habit which the poor wore, and the rich occasionally assumed as a garb of humiliation or mourning. He was therefore, even in outward appearance, a second Elijah, and much more in spirit, being endued, as the angel had announced, with *the spirit and power* of that eminent servant of God. Both were raised up in a period of nearly universal corruption, and both executed their commission with zeal and intrepidity. The abstemiousness and rigour of the Baptist's life were calculated to excite attention and reverence, to reclaim the thoughtless, and to alarm the impenitent; but whatever mortification he practised himself, he was a preacher not of penance, but of reformation; and we do not find that he enjoined upon others more than the forsaking of sin, and the fulfilment of their duties. His own call was for a season to baptize in the desert, but we find that he continued there only because it was his appointed station; for he afterwards frequented the palace of Herod, whom he reproved as boldly as Elijah had the king of Israel.

7. *The Angel informs Joseph of his virgin bride's miraculous conception of the predicted Saviour. Matt. i. 18—25.*

When Joseph found that his betrothed wife was pregnant, he was at a loss how to act; for, as *a just man*, he was desirous of divorcing her, yet, as a merciful one, of doing it *privately*, and this might be done without a breach of the law. In this perplexity he fell asleep, and an angel, probably Gabriel, was sent to remove his doubts, by informing him of her miraculous conception, and to instruct him to take her to his home, it being the design of Divine Providence to raise up, in him, a friend and protector for the

Virgin and the infant Saviour. The angel announced to him, as he had before to the future mother, that the Child should be called *Jesus*. Such is the Greek corruption of the name, which the angel must have pronounced Joshua; and which in the course of time has superseded the original. It had been borne, among others, by two eminent men, types of this divine Joshua. The first was the son of Nun, the friend and successor of Moses, who led the Israelites into the earthly Canaan, and gave rest unto them from all their enemies; *a rest* which is shown in the epistle to the Hebrews^g to be a figure of *that which yet remaineth* (in heaven, the true Canaan) *to the people of God*. The second was the son of Josedech, high priest on the return from the Captivity, whom, as well as Zerubbabel the civil governor, Haggai^h stirred up to rebuild the Temple, and concerning whom Zechariahⁱ has two prophecies. He is called in both, as typical of the true Joshua, *the Branch*, which the Septuagint renders Ἀνατολή, and hence perhaps this word, translated in our version *Day-spring*, is transferred in that sense to the song of Zacharias, the father of the Baptist. *The Man whose name is the Branch*, is also called by the prophet, *a Priest upon his throne*; and this High Priest *after the order of Melchisedek* is alone entitled and qualified to wear both the royal and sacerdotal crowns, which, though assumed by the Levite rulers of the Maccabæan line, were according to the Jewish polity incompatible; and king Uzziah's attempt to perform the priest's office had been miraculously punished by leprosy, which by a just retribution produced exclusion from his own. Our Lord wears *many crowns*, and has many names, but that of Jesus or Saviour is higher than any, even than that of Creator. Others command our reverence, but this, purchased by his own self-denying assumption of our nature, and his sufferings in it unto death, claims our gratitude; and that it may

^g Heb. iv.^h Haggai i. 11.ⁱ Zech. iii. vi.

be honoured as it deserves, the Apostle tells us, that the Father hath decreed that at this Name *every knee should bow*, not of men only, but of all beings *in heaven and under the earth*, and that *every tongue should confess that Jesus is the Lord*, which, instead of derogating from his own *glory*, he assures us will augment it^k. The angel explains the nature of the salvation; *He shall save his people from their sins*, and this is a double cure, not only from guilt and its consequences, punishment, shame, and misery, but also from their dominion; for Sanctification or personal holiness is, as well as Justification or forgiveness, included in the Gospel covenant. None then can have a right to the privileges and consolations of believers, who are not humbled and grieved for their sins, and endeavouring, in reliance on God's cooperating grace, to subdue them. A deliverer not from temporal but from spiritual enemies, from sin, and from the evil spirit the author of sin, must be divine. And St. Matthew affirms that this name, which sounds so sweet in a believer's ear, is equivalent to Emmanuel; for he considers it as fulfilling Isaiah's prediction, that *the Virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son*. It is indeed more than equivalent, for Joshua means Jehovah, the Saviour; but Emmanuel, that is, God with us, connects with divinity his humanity. The son of Nun delivered Israel not by his own power, but as God's instrument, and saved not his own people, but the people of God; whereas our Joshua, as the angel declared, shall by his own power *save his own people*. Such a Saviour, his peculiar people, with few exceptions, no longer expected or desired; but such an one had always been the hope of the pious Israelite, who with the patriarch, from whom he derived his name, could exclaim in death, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!* And such we know was the sense assigned to Jacob's passionate exclamation by the Targumist, who

^k Phil. ii. 9—11.

^l Gen. xlix. 18.

thus paraphrases it; "I wait not for the salvation of Gideon or of Samson, which are temporal, but for thy salvation; for thy deliverance, O Lord, is an eternal deliverance."

Our Redeemer is now commonly called Jesus Christ, but to many to whom *he is precious*, and *altogether lovely*, as he must appear in the eyes of all who have the faintest notion of his pre-eminent excellence, and of their infinite obligation to him, this connection of the words, from its resemblance to the name and surname of those among whom we live, sounds too familiar, unless accompanied by the title of our Lord. Accurately speaking, his name is Jesus, or more correctly, Joshua; and by this appellation he was indiscriminately addressed upon earth. Christ, equivalent to the Hebrew Messiah, is his official designation, meaning one who is *anointed*, and would be applied to him by none but those who acknowledged him as their Sovereign. In the Scriptures this distinction is carefully observed; but as, out of respect to our Lord, Jesus is never given as a baptismal name, it has obtained a sacred character, and in modern times either that or Christ is used of him indifferently; but it is better to employ the former when we would draw attention to the salvation he has wrought for us, the latter when we would speak of his ministry, or dwell upon his dignity and his claims to our obedience as our King.

8. *The Birth at Bethlehem of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Matt. i. 25.

Mary was probably very young, and her husband advanced in years. In obedience to the Divine command, he took her home, but *knew her not until she had brought forth her first-born Son*; and he called him, as he had been instructed, *Jesus*. Thus her Offspring, *conceived of the Holy Ghost*, was literally the promised Seed of a Woman, and perfect

Man, without any taint of the original sin, which is inherited by all the natural progeny of Adam. He was also born in wedlock, which preserved his virgin mother from disgrace; and the knowledge of the mystery was confined to Mary, her husband, and a few friends, until our Lord's resurrection, and the formation of his church required it to be divulged. This birth from a Virgin had been clearly foretold seven centuries before by Isaiah, (vii. 14.) and, more obscurely, by Jeremiah, (xxxi. 22.) *The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man.* This declaration is so interpreted by most Christian, and by several Jewish, expositors, of whom the author of the Mishna deserves to be specified; and the connection in which it stands, the prediction of the return of the Jews to their own land, is favourable to this view of it. Such an event, apparently impossible, none but a true prophet would venture to predict, and none but he who inspired the prophet could accomplish. The evangelist's language does not necessarily imply that she afterwards cohabited with her husband; her virginity is an ecclesiastical tradition, and we may at least infer that she had no other children, from our Lord's recommending her to the care of his beloved disciple, who in consequence took her to his home. The Nazarenes enumerated four of his brethren, (Matt. xiii. 55.) but we know that the Virgin had sisters; and as the term in Hebrew includes nephews and cousins-german, (Gen. xiii. 8. 2 Kings x. 13.) the supposition that they were the sons of Mary, or of Joseph by a former marriage, is not necessary, and the latter is incompatible with the hypothesis, that deduces our Lord's right to the throne of David through his mother the nearest of kin, after the demise of her husband. And we know that James, who became first Bishop of Jerusalem, called the *Lord's brother*, (Gal. i. 19.) was the son of Alpheus.

9, 10. *The two Genealogies of Christ.* Matt. i. Luke iii.

As the Messiah was to be the Son of David after the flesh, it became necessary to prove his descent; and accordingly the successive steps are recorded both by Matthew and Luke. These genealogies, however, are so dissimilar, that they cannot, at least in the same sense, belong to one individual, for they are traced through two different sons of David, Solomon and Nathan; and they agree only in two descents, those of Salathiel and his son Zorobabel. It was an ancient opinion that both belonged to Joseph; the first as his natural, the second as his legal, pedigree; and this is reported by Africanus, a contemporary of Origen, on the authority of some of our Lord's relations. I think, however, with South, that this would destroy the foundation of our religion; and it is not credible that these pedigrees should have been so understood by authors, who take care to inform us that Jesus was not the real, but only the reputed, son of Joseph, and whose object it was to show, that the Messiah was not merely by adoption the legal heir of David, but also *the fruit of his loins*, (Acts ii. 30.) The difficulty is removed by maintaining, that Joseph and Mary were both descended from David, and that the genealogy of the former is recorded by Matthew, and that of the latter by Luke: the former, writing for Jews, commences with Abraham their ancestor; the latter, writing for Gentiles, carries up the line to Adam, because all his descendants are interested in this Son of David; and this shows, that one deduced only his title to the crown, the other his natural descent. These genealogies seem to have been transcribed from the public registers, which we know continued to be kept in the time of Josephus; and if so, the Evangelists are not answerable for them. In that of Luke there appear to have been interpolations, as some early Christian writers made his generations seventy-two, and we have seventy-seven. He or his

copyists follow the Septuagint, in inserting a second Cainan between Arphaxad and Sala; and dropping this and the third and fourth names from Nathan to Neri, which are omitted in many Manuscripts, we reduce them to the former number. Matthew has omitted purposely three kings, the descendants of Athaliah, and also Jehoiakim, and it is thought some persons between Obed and Jesse, since it seems unlikely that four in succession should live above a century; but this is doubtful, for Matthew wished to arrange the genealogy in three divisions of fourteen generations, the first and third of which should consist of private individuals, and the intermediate one of sovereigns; and it is the most probable reason for the omission in the middle series, that in the two others the number recorded was really fourteen. The women named are memorable either as sinners or as gentiles: Tamar, guilty of incest, and Bathsheba, of adultery, Rahab, a Canaanite, and Ruth, a Moabite; and they may be named to indicate, that as our Lord descended both from sinners and from gentiles, he is a Saviour without exception for both.

Mary is allowed by the Jews to be the daughter of Eli, and her father having no son, her husband is reckoned to him, as it was not the national custom to trace a pedigree through a female; or, with Yardley^m and others, we may thus paraphrase Luke's words; Jesus being *as was supposed the son of Joseph*, but in reality the *son* (that is, the grandson) of *Heli*. Matthew's language also shows that he did not mean to assert, in contradiction to his narrative, that Jesus was really the son of Joseph; for in his instance alone he carefully avoids the term used before, *begat*; writing, *Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was* (or had been) *born Jesus*. Southⁿ maintains, that the royal line of David by Solomon being extinct in Jeconiah,

^m The Genealogies critically examined, p. 225.

ⁿ Oxford Edition, 1842, vol. ii. p. 214.

whom (Jer. xxii. 30.) God wrote *childless*, the right to his crown passed into the next line of Nathan in Salathiel. Solomon, according to this scheme, has no connexion with the Messiah; and the divines who follow him endeavour to show, that though the Jews believe in his descent from him, there is no scriptural warrant for that opinion. They argue, that though God promised to Solomon, (1 Chron. xxii. 10.) that he would establish the throne of his kingdom for ever, yet it is not said in his seed; and that besides, the kingdom there spoken of was the spiritual kingdom, which his temporal one only typified. Others, however, as Calvin, who, agreeing with the Jews, think it foretold that the Messiah should descend through Solomon, connect the two genealogies by assuming that Neri died without male issue, and that his daughter, heiress of the family of Nathan, united the two branches by marrying Salathiel, the eldest of Solomon's descendants. Upon this supposition, Jeconiah was the real father of Salathiel, and the latter is reckoned to Neri in the same way as Joseph is to Heli; and this interpretation appears to me the most satisfactory, since both Matthew and the Book of Chronicles (i. ii. 16.) maintain Salathiel's descent from him; and the expression on which South insists need not be taken literally, but understood only to mean that he should not beget a king like himself. Salathiel's son, Zorobabel, had two, Abiud and Rhesa, the ancestors respectively of Joseph and Mary, and the former line failing in him, his right passes over to his wife as now next of kin, and through her to Jesus, who is thus shown to be the heir, as well as the son, of David. No descent can be more illustrious than that of the kings of Judah, who, according to promise, succeeded one another in an unbroken line of eighteen generations, a fact without a parallel in history, ancient or modern. This is strikingly contrasted by the kingdom of Israel governed by different families, only one of which, that of Jehu, was allowed to reach the fourth generation.

11. *The infant Saviour receives the homage of shepherds.**Luke ii. 8—20.*

Bethlehem, the predicted birthplace of the Messiah, a village six miles south of Jerusalem, is more than fifty from Nazareth. The Virgin, far advanced in her pregnancy, had no motive to take the journey, till the Emperor Augustus, whose paramount authority superseded when he pleased such nominally independent sovereigns as Herod, ordered a census of the population, the time of which coincided with that of her delivery; and this enrolment by command of a foreign potentate was a badge of subjection, which proved, contrary to appearances, that the sceptre had now actually passed from Judah. We have in this decree a striking illustration of the mode in which the Omniscient and Almighty God accomplishes his purposes, without interfering with the free agency of his moral creatures. Persons were to be registered, not at their homes, but at the towns to which they legally belonged. Joseph therefore was under the necessity of travelling to Bethlehem. Mary accompanied him, but it does not appear whether her presence was required, or that she judged it proper to avail herself of this providential opportunity of claiming her descent from David, knowing she was with child of the Messiah.

Taxing, the word used in our version, has a tendency to mislead. It ought to be *Registering*, which is often the preliminary to taxation, in its modern sense. It is recorded by Luke not so much to mark the time of Christ's birth, as its occurrence at Bethlehem, and that Mary and his reputed father were at that time allowed to be descendants of the royal family; for the Scripture said, *Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem*^o. This registering was clearly made before the death of Herod; yet the Evangelist connects it with Quirinus, or, as he calls him

^o John vii. 12.

in Greek, Cyrenius, who ten years after, being governor of Syria, made one, on the deposition of Archelaus. As it cannot be supposed that the Evangelist has mistaken the time, some method of making his language consistent with the fact must be devised. Lardner's elaborate Dissertation, considerably longer, says Dr. Hales, than Luke's whole Gospel, offers only a choice of difficulties. Our version, *This taxing was first made*, seems to assert an impossibility, that the same taxation was made more than once. Scaliger and other eminent critics translate, *This taxation was made before Cyrenius was governor of Syria*; and Mr. Greswell, who supports this interpretation, takes it as a parenthetic admonition, not to confound this with the later and more remarkable one. Lardner translates, *This was the first enrolment of Cyrenius*; and he supposes that that officer was sent from Rome for this purpose, and is designated by his subsequent appointment. The supposition, however, has no support from history, and seems hardly reconcileable with the text, which represents Cyrenius as actually governing at the time, and it appears to me that Hales is right in supposing, that *this taxing first took effect when Cyrenius was governing*, is the meaning which the Evangelist intended to convey. Josephus informs us, that Augustus had been provoked to write to Herod, that he would no longer treat him as a friend but as a subject; and he afterwards mentions the whole nation taking an oath of fidelity to Cæsar, and to the king jointly. This was probably administered at the time of the census; but Augustus being reconciled to Herod, the tribute designed to follow was suspended, till Cyrenius, when governor of Syria, was ordered to confiscate the property of Archelaus. The word translated *all the world*, properly means *inhabited country*; it is generally applied to the Roman empire, but it is used for Judæa by Josephus, and in the Septuagint, and must be so restricted in this instance, as the historians mention no census of the popu-

lation of the whole of Augustus's dominions, though they do of the numbering of Roman citizens. *All* may be added to show, that Galilee was included.

Thus he, *who for our sakes, though rich, became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich*, was pleased to commence a life of indigence, the whole course of which ennobles poverty, and exposes the vanity of earthly distinctions. Had our Lord appeared, as was expected, as a king, or had he even been born in a wealthy family in private life, he could not have exhibited several of his characteristic virtues; his example would not have been so extensively useful; and the great and rich would have been still more tempted than they are at present to despise their poor brethren, for whom he became incarnate and died, no less than for them. His birth, however, though his rank was low, and the town in which it took place was humble, was marked by higher honours than have been conferred upon any other. It was unnoticed by the great of this world, but it was announced by a heavenly messenger to *shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks by night*, and the intelligence was declared to be a subject of *great joy to all the people*. *Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord*; and as the angel would address them in their own language, we may suppose he used the name *Jehovah*, and if so, they must have understood that the *Babe in swaddling clothes*, to whom they were directed, was the Incarnate Deity. Even if *Lord* was pronounced instead of the sacred name, it indicates in this connection, though it does not plainly assert, the Divinity of the Babe of Bethlehem. Any doubt that might arise on hearing of so extraordinary an event must have been dispelled, when *suddenly a multitude of other ministering spirits joined the angel*; and this *army of heaven praised God*, by declaring, that the birth of this infant, which would promote *God's glory in the highest*

heaven, would be on earth the proof of *good will*, and the cause of *peace to men*^p. Its tendency would be to promote peace in the lower sense of mutual kindness of disposition and action between those who are by creation, and still more by redemption, brethren, the result of genuine Christianity, which no human principle has ever produced in an equal degree; but it must here be taken in its highest sense, for the reconciliation of a justly offended Creator and guilty creatures, which he, who is emphatically designated as *our Peace*, came into the world to accomplish; and this comprehends too as its effect that inward peace of mind *passing all understanding*, which the world can neither give nor take away. Having been apprised where to find their Lord, the shepherds hastened to pay him homage, and returned to their occupation with thankful hearts, *glorifying and praising God*. They made known the fact, which caused in the hearers a temporary wonder, but Mary *pondered it in her heart*. As Bethlehem was on the occasion crowded with travellers in more prosperous circumstances than Joseph and his betrothed bride, *there was no room for them in the apartments in the inn*. The Saviour of the world, therefore, made his first appearance as man in his own peculiar country, in which he never possessed even the meanest home,—in a *stable*^q.

B.C. 5. Neither the year nor day of our Saviour's birth has been ascertained; and Scaliger, a great chronological authority, classes it among the mysteries that will never be discovered. Our present mode of computation, which did not come into general use till the eighth century, was invented early in the sixth by Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman Abbot, who chose to date his Paschal cycle from this event, instead

^p There is a remarkable various reading, *to men of good will*, followed by the Vulgate, which would contract the meaning, but is probably erroneous.

^q φάτνη, manger, A. T.

of from the then received æra of Diocletian, or, as it is oftener called, of the Martyrs. Unfortunately, he assumed his date of the Nativity upon reasonings, which more accurate investigations have proved to be incorrect, and chronologers are now agreed, that he has placed it about four years after the time. The day also is unknown; for though the Roman church has from the time of Constantine, commemorated this event on the 25th of December, it was probably induced to assume this date by the wish of consecrating the Saturnalia; and in this, as in other instances, converting a Pagan into a Christian festival. We learn from Chrysostom, that this custom had been introduced into the East from the West, for the Greeks originally kept this feast on the sixth of January, together with that of the Epiphany, because they imagined that the star first appeared to the Magi in their own country, on the night of the Saviour's birth. But this date cannot stand examination, for its basis is, that the father of the Baptist was the high priest, and that it was on the day of atonement that Gabriel appeared to him; whereas the text itself contradicts this scheme, calling Zacharias a *certain* priest, and naming his course and his residence; while the high priest was not reckoned of any, and lived always in Jerusalem. Some modern critics assign it to the feast of Tabernacles, or the day of Atonement, in the autumn of the year of Rome 749, or to the spring following. The nature of this work precludes the discussion of the question; but I refer those who take an interest in it to a Dissertation by Mr. Greswell, who advances, as a conjecture, that the day of the Nativity is that on which the paschal lamb was set apart preparatory to its sacrifice, that is, the tenth of Nisan, answering to the fifth of April, 750, four years before the vulgar æra. There is, he observes, no fact in our Lord's history, nor altogether consistent with his birth about the vernal equinox; and, certainly, that or the autumnal one is more suitable than

the winter solstice, both to the taking of the census, and to the keeping of sheep in the fields at night. Scaliger's preference of autumn is based upon the fact, that when Judas Maccabæus restored the temple worship, it was performed by the first company of Priests. As the rest succeeded in turn, it is calculated that Zachariah's would attend in July or August; and as the Angel appeared to Mary in the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy, in January, our Saviour might be born in the September following.

12. *Circumcision and Presentation of Christ in the Temple.*
Luke ii. 21—38.

Our Lord "took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance" only. He was therefore exempt from the "birth-sin," inherited by "every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam," and, accordingly, needed not the renewal of his nature which Circumcision denotes. Still, as the seed of Abraham, to whom it was given as a seal of the covenant of faith, and as *born under the Law*, it was fit that he should comply with this, as well as its other ordinances; and as his mission was to the Jews, he could not fulfil it without attending the service of the Temple and the Synagogue, from which the omission of this rite would have excluded him. Upon the same principle, his Virgin Mother submitted to the purification prescribed by the Law, though an exception from all the rest of her sex. It was evident that she was a mother, and it was not expedient that she should claim exemption by announcing her miraculous conception. A lamb was required for a burnt-offering, and a turtle dove or a young pigeon for a sin-offering; but the kind consideration which characterises the Mosaic Law, accepted another bird instead of the lamb from those for whom that offering would be too expensive^r. The fact that the Virgin offered the latter seems to prove,

^r Lev. xii.

that the Magi had not yet presented their gifts. Gratitude for deliverance from "the great pain and peril of childbirth" might naturally call for a thankful acknowledgment; but the reasonableness of a sin-offering can be understood only by him who believes with the Psalmist^a, that he is *shapen in wickedness, and that in sin hath his mother conceived him*. The Law was continually teaching the fundamental doctrine, Original Sin, by declaring that a mother continued unclean for forty days, and that seven days must elapse before her son who was born in that condition could be admitted into covenant with God. It is most remarkable, that the time was doubled if the child was a female; and the reason has not been recorded, yet we cannot doubt that it was because *Eve being deceived was in the transgression*, and was the first to yield to the temptation of the Devil.

As Jesus was a first-born son, the Law^t required that he should be presented to the Lord and redeemed. An event occurred upon the occasion, which must have strengthened Mary's faith and hope; for when she and Joseph brought him for that purpose, Simeon was influenced by the Holy Spirit to enter the temple. He was one of those spiritual worshippers, who were waiting for the birth of this *Consolation of Israel*, and to whom it had been revealed that he should not die till he had seen the Lord's Christ. Taking in his arms the infant Saviour, he was endowed with the gift of prophecy, now, as we have seen in the instances of Zacharias and the Virgin, after a suspension of four centuries, granted to a favoured few. His hymn rises above theirs^u. The Virgin gave vent to her personal feelings, and her subject closes with her Son's birth. Zacharias opened a prospective but limited field of vision; but while the *Consolation of Israel* had been Simeon's hope through life, and its arrival the signal for his peaceful dissolution, he saw

^a Psalm li.

^t Exod. xiii.

^u Bp. Jebb, Sacred Literature, sect. xxii. pp. 418—428.

with a prophetic glance, like Isaiah^x, the removal of the veil from the understanding and affections of the Gentiles, and rejoiced not only that the Saviour will be the *glory of his own people Israel*, but that he is also given as a *Light to lighten the Gentiles, to be the Lord's Salvation to the ends of the earth*; and declared that he should now depart in peace, since he has seen this Saviour. The first part of the prediction has long been partially fulfilled, and is happily fulfilling daily, but the second still remains unaccomplished. Jesus is a reproach to unbelieving Israel, and Israel styles him accursed; but we know that the time approaches when the veil will be taken away from their hearts, and they will turn to the Lord. Their recovery from unbelief will be *as life from the dead* to themselves, and to the remaining unconverted Gentiles who will come to the brightness of their rising; and when the Redeemer cometh to Zion, and they exclaim, *blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, they shall feel, and the whole world will allow, that he is the *glory of his people Israel*. Simeon then blessed Joseph and his Mother, but moderated the expectation he might have raised of the universal welcome that awaited such a Child, by predicting, that he *is set for the fall as well as the rising again of many in Israel*, and that *through him the reasonings of many hearts would be revealed*, for he would be *for a sign which shall be spoken against and opposed*. He added, that she herself shall be pierced by a javelin; apparently in allusion not to her death, but to her anguish of mind. Simeon's testimony was corroborated by that of Anna, a *prophetess*, an aged and devout widow, *who served God with fastings and prayers night and day*. She was constant in her attendance in the temple, and now not only joined in thanksgiving, but also spake of the Infant as the *Messiah to all in Jerusalem who looked for redemption*.

^x Isaiah xlii. 6. xlix. 6—9.

13. *The Eastern Magi bring offerings as an homage to the new-born King of the Jews. Joseph by divine direction conducts the Virgin and her Son into Egypt, to avoid the fury of Herod, who, in order to destroy Jesus, massacred all the male infant children of Bethlehem. The Holy Family, after his death, settles at Nazareth. Matt. ii.*

The prophecy of Simeon soon began to be fulfilled in the arrival of strangers, whom a star, seen by them in their own country, induced to seek him who had been so lately proclaimed *a Light to lighten the Gentiles*. The period of their arrival is unknown; but the twelfth day after the Nativity, on which it is celebrated, seems too early even for a journey from Arabia, from which Justin Martyr and Tertullian would bring them, instead of from the further East; and I think it must have been at the soonest after the Presentation. Some harmonists fix it to the following year, and, as it is said that Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth, they assume it was to make arrangements for removing to Bethlehem. They might think the education of her Son in the place in which his birth had been providentially brought to pass, was required to his acknowledgment as the Messiah; and we know that they would have settled there on their return, if God had not interfered to prevent it. The age of the children marked out for death is also thought to indicate, that Jesus at the time of the command was at least entering upon his second year; for if he had been only twelve or forty days old, we can hardly suppose that even such a tyrant as Herod would have been guilty of so wanton an act of cruelty, as to put to death those among whom the object of his alarm could not have been included.

An angel had revealed to Jewish Shepherds the birth of their King; and the same happy event, in which the Gentiles were equally interested, was indicated to eastern Sages by a different but no less manifest interposition of Divine Pro-

vidence. In the original they are called Magi, whence our word Magician, but they resemble each other only in name; for the former studied nature to discover the properties and uses of God's creatures, the latter, that they might procure superhuman power by compelling spirits to execute their will. They were not idolaters like other heathen, but worshipped only one God, under the emblem of fire, though they magnified his benevolence by diminishing his power, too large a share of which they ascribed to the Evil Principle. And in a subsequent age, this doctrine, called, from the Persian heresiarch Manes, Manicheism, for a long season corrupted the Church. The studies of the Magi must have been innocent, for Daniel, who had risked his life because he would not break the Law, did not scruple to preside over those of Babylon^y. A notion early prevailed, that these first-fruits of the Gentile Church were Kings; but it is unsupported by the narrative of the Evangelist, and apparently originated from the application to them of the prophecy in the seventy-second Psalm, that *the kings of Arabia and Saba shall bring gifts*, which also led to the belief that they came from that country. The religion of Zoroaster might have had some professors of it there, but Persia, where it was the established religion, was its chief seat; and I conceive that these Magi came from that empire, and probably from Mesopotamia, the country of Abraham and of Balaam, whose prediction of the Star that was to come out of Jacob, might have kept alive there the expectation of a Jewish Sovereign of the world. The journey these Magi so readily undertook shows their piety; and as they were afterwards warned by God, it seems not improbable that the reason of the first appearance of the star had been revealed to them. Whatever were the causes, as the time drew nigh, Gentiles as well as Jews, the West no less than the East, were looking forward to the reign of an universal

^y Daniel v. 11.

Sovereign. Virgil^x had already, in language apparently borrowed from the Hebrew Scriptures, announced in an application complimentary to Augustus Cæsar the approaching fulfilment of a Sibyll's prophecy, a new Progeny to be sent down from Heaven, at whose birth the iron race should cease, and a golden one rise on the whole world. This notion of a coming period of peace and virtue must have been current before in Italy, for it had previously excited the ambition of Lentulus, and involved him in Catiline's conspiracy. In Asia, observes Suetonius in his life of Vespasian, it was an ancient and constant opinion, that sovereignty would belong to one who came out of Judæa; and Tacitus reports^y, that many were persuaded, that it was recorded in the ancient writings of the Priests, (by which he must mean the Jewish Scriptures,) that the East should prevail^z. According to him, it was in a great degree owing to this notion that Vespasian obtained the Empire, and it was by applying to him the predictions respecting the Messiah that Josephus obtained his favour. The term *East* is remarkable, for it is the Latin version of *Branch* in the prophecy of Zechariah^a, rendered in the Septuagint 'Ανατολή, Day-spring, and in either sense really belongs of right to Him alone, who is both *a Rod out of the stem of Jesse*, and *a Branch out of his roots*^b, and that *Sun of righteousness*^c, of whom Isaiah^d prophesied, that his glory should be seen upon Zion, and that *kings should come to the brightness of her rising*.

The enquiry of the Magi in the capital of Judæa for the new-born King of the Jews with reason alarmed Herod, for, as a descendant of Esau, he had no title to the crown, which

^x Jam nova progenies cælo demittitur alto.

Tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum

Desinet, et toto surget gens aurea mundo,

Casta fave Lucina.

^y Hist. v. 13. ^z Oriens valesceret. ^a Zech. iii. 8. ^b Js. xi. 1.

^c Mal. iv. 2.

^d Is. lx. 2, 3.

was the gift of foreigners and idolaters, through whose power he reigned; and he was moreover hated by his subjects. It is added, *all Jerusalem with him*; for the Jews expected that the reign of the Messiah would be ushered in by a train of calamities, and they had had sufficient experience of their sovereign's disposition to know, that no mercy or scruples would withhold him from the perpetration of any act of atrocity which his fear might prompt.

By an inconsistent yet not unexampled mixture of belief in prophecy and the hope of defeating it, Herod first ascertained from an assembly of the priests and scribes, that Bethlehem was the birth-place of the true King of Israel, and then planned his destruction. The Magi acted upon the information obtained at Jerusalem, and as they were on their way to Bethlehem, the star again appeared, and standing over the house where the Babe was, precluded the possibility of mistake. This decides that it must have been not a real star, but a meteor. The total absence of the magnificence that they might expect was no stumbling-block to these faithful Gentiles, for their joy is expressed in the strongest terms. They did homage, nothing doubting, to the infant King, whom they came to honour, after the fashion of the East, by prostrating themselves, and presenting suitable gifts; and as *gold, frankincense, and myrrh*, alone are specified, it is concluded, without any other reason, that they were no more than three. Thus Jesus was acknowledged as a King in the place of his nativity by a chosen few of Jews and Gentiles, by the shepherds, and by the Magi. Herod's craftiness seems to have deserted him. By trusting to their fidelity, instead of sending with them spies under the pretence of honouring them, his plan was frustrated; for though their intention was to return to Jerusalem, it was altered in consequence of a divine intimation. Herod, exasperated by disappointment, put to death all the male children in Bethlehem and its neighbourhood, who might be supposed to have been born within the specified

time. The atrocious act only plunged him deeper into guilt; for the Infant he sought to slay was not to die till the appointed time, or by any but the appointed instruments; and before the command was issued, was secure beyond his reach; for an angel, probably Gabriel, had previously warned Joseph to *flee into Egypt with the young Child and his mother*. Thus Mary's espousals with him had been the means of raising up a protector for them in the ordinary course of events; and the oblations of the eastern sages enabled them to bear the expense of a journey, and of a short residence in a foreign land.

It seems extraordinary, that the first effect of the Saviour's birth, announced as it had been by angels as *tidings of great joy*, should be to plunge in sorrow many mothers by this indiscriminate slaughter. They refused to be comforted, because their children were not; yet a moment's reflection will satisfy all who, like us, believe that the death of this Babe of Bethlehem was an atonement for original as well as actual guilt, that to these "Innocents" as they are called in our theological phraseology, this early removal from a world of sin and suffering was their unspeakable gain; and we can see, that the massacre that left Jesus the sole survivor, clearly marked him out, at the proper period, as the only Bethlehemite of his age who could claim to be the Messiah. Meanwhile by causing his flight into Egypt, it both secured him from other attempts to cut him off prematurely, and enabled him to grow up in the obscurity required before the commencement of his ministry. Tradition names Heliopolis, as the place of their temporary abode; the Greeks called it On, where Onias the high priest, rejected on the establishment of the Maccabæan sovereigns, had founded a temple. Wherever it might be, as Egypt then abounded with Jews, (according to Philo there being in it no fewer than a million,) they were not compelled to associate with foreigners, and their exile could not have been long; for, upon Herod's death, they returned, according

to the instructions conveyed to them by an angel, not as they intended to Bethlehem, then in the dominions of his eldest surviving son Archelaus, but to Nazareth, in those of his brother Herod Antipas, the original home of Joseph and of Mary, deterred probably by the cruel character of the former, who would have had no scruple in following up the designs of his father against Jesus. We are here, as in the whole of the Bible history, permitted to see, what in profane annals we can only conjecture, how the Almighty Disposer of events, without interfering with man's free agency, overrules all things according to his own purposes of judgment and of mercy.

14. *Jesus, when twelve years of age, questions and answers the Doctors in the Temple. Luke ii. 41—52.*

At Nazareth the Saviour grew up in obscurity, his birth-place, and the wonders which had revealed his real dignity to a few chosen witnesses of Jewish and Gentile extraction, being alike unknown to the nation. It is said, that he grew *strong in spirit*, and was *filled with wisdom*; but how and by what degrees the indwelling Deity communicated wisdom and holiness to his human nature, it is unprofitable, and seems to be presumptuous, to conjecture.

It is natural to desire to know some particulars of the Saviour's childhood; and the authors of the false gospels undertake to gratify this wish. The anecdotes they detail, however, are so absurd, that they carry with them their own refutation; and we may be sure, since the information we wish has been withheld, that it was not expedient that it should be recorded. St. John could have given us from the Virgin a full and particular account; but his object, and that of the other Evangelists, was the public ministry, not the private life, of the Saviour. He takes care to tell us, that the changing of the water into wine was his first miracle; and this seems to be an indirect contradiction of the reputed ones of his infancy, which, though committed

to writing long after, might be already in circulation. We know in general, that he was obedient to Joseph and Mary; and as he was called the Carpenter^e, he probably assisted his reputed father in his trade, and made ploughs and yokes, as reported by Justin Martyr. Joseph's circumstances rendered this imperative, but if they had not, he would have been bound to provide him with the means of maintaining himself by some trade or mechanical employment. The indispensable duties of a Jewish father to a son, were to circumcise him, to redeem him, to teach him the Law, and to instruct him in some occupation. Thus Paul, as a tent maker, supported himself and his companions; and Maimonides says of the wise men of Israel, that some of them were hewers of wood, and others drawers of water. Only a single incident of the youth of our Saviour is preserved. Joseph, as a conscientious Israelite, went up yearly to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, and his wife was in the habit of accompanying him, although the Law did not require the attendance of females. When Jesus was twelve years old, he went up with them; and his age is mentioned, because that at which it was customary to admit youths into the congregation by a ceremony, corresponding to Confirmation in our Church. The festival being over, they returned, and journeying in a company, as is still the custom of the East, did not discover that Jesus had remained behind, till the members of each family, who might have been apart during the day, met together for the night. They went back to Jerusalem in quest of him, where they found him in some chamber of the temple, questioning and answering the teachers of the Law, and with such wisdom and propriety, as to astonish all who heard him. The vulgar notion, that he disputed with the doctors, derived from some commentators, and strengthened by paintings, receives no countenance from the text. His reply, *how is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I ought*

to be in my Father's house^f? might be designed to reprove his mother for assigning that title to Joseph, and seems to intimate, that they had not been sufficiently attentive to the various circumstances that designated his future office.

The whole of the preceding history has been boldly rejected by modern Anti-Trinitarians, and is printed in their new version in Italics, as if it were of doubtful authority, although the editors are obliged to confess, that these chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke have been found in all unmutilated manuscripts and in the early versions. The facts they contain are also referred to both by the earliest Christian authors, and by the earliest opponents of Christianity; and it deserves to be considered, that a prominent topic of discussion between those who favoured and those who opposed Jesus, was, his descent from David, and his birth in the city of that king, the proofs of which are only to be found in these chapters which they treat as spurious additions, though they cannot give any plausible account of the origin of the assumed forgery. The δὲ in the phrase Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμεραῖς, with which they would commence St. Matthew's gospel, like Ἐν ἔτει δὲ πέντε καὶ δεκάτῳ in that of St. Luke, implies that something had preceded; nor would Matthew have said^g, *Jesus leaving Nazareth*, unless he had mentioned before^h, that *he came and dwelt* there. The internal objections, then, that is, the fabulous nature, as it is asserted, of the narrative, and the mode in which prophecy is applied, are the only ones worthy of notice. But these will not justify our rejection of what the whole Christian world, till our own days, has agreed to receive as Scripture, since this fabulous nature is a mere assertion, and the objections to the prophecies may be shown to be unfounded. I would remark, as to the first, that the very nature of the

^f The omission of the substantive seems to me to be better supplied by *house* than *business*.

^g Matt. iv. 13.

^h Matt. ii. 23.

narrative requires the intervention of angels, and that no more of the wonderful is introduced than was indispensable; and that if such objections are to determine the genuineness of the text, we should on this principle reject the Temptation, and the testimony of angels to the Resurrection.

It is also argued, that the massacre at Bethlehem must be a fabrication, because unnoticed by historians; but Josephus, the only author who could be expected to record it, compiled his narrative from the partial account of Herod's minister Nicolaus, and therefore is likely to be silent. The transaction too, however horrible, might not be of sufficient notoriety or importance to find its way into history. Michaelis estimates the number slain under twenty; but, without affecting an accuracy for which we have not sufficient data, we may observe, that as Bethlehem was a small place, and as the infants were exclusively males, the slaughter was probably not so great as is commonly supposed. Still some indistinct intimations of it have been transmitted to us; for Cedrenus says, that Herod was distinguished by the title of Child-slayer; and Macrobius¹ furnishes heathen testimony: for he reports, that when Augustus heard that *among the children*, whom Herod king of the Jews ordered to be slain in Syria, was his own son, he said, "It is better to be Herod's hog than his son." Antipater his eldest he did kill for a conspiracy, only five days before his decease; and in the repetition of the story some ages after, it is not unnatural that such an event should be confounded with the Bethlehem massacre. He had already put to death his favourite wife and three sons, and it was his dying request to his sister, that there should be a general slaughter of the principal persons in the nation, that those who would otherwise have rejoiced at his funeral, might be compelled to mourn. Surely then we need have no scruple in believ-

¹ He spoke Greek, and played upon the similarity of the two words, which differ only in a letter, *υἱὸν*, *ὑόν*. Sat. ii. 4.

ing, that such a wretch would command any crime, that could gratify his resentment or strengthen his authority. It is remarkable, that, incredible as it may seem to some, it had a precedent in Roman history, and that within the knowledge of Herod. A Sibylline oracle had announced, that Nature was about to bring forth a king of the Romans, in the very year of the birth of Augustus^k; and the prediction so terrified the Senate, that they decreed, that all males born within that period should be exposed. The senators, whose wives were pregnant, had influence sufficient to prevent the registering the decree; but it deserves notice, that it originated from similar apprehensions, and that the act was only prevented by individual feeling. In those unhappy times, when human life was so little valued, that the exposure of infants was an ordinary event, the slaughter of them would not produce the same sensation as in a Christian or even Mahometan country.

The second objection, which affects only the first gospel, is, that the author of the introductory chapters assigned to Matthew, has brought forward as testimony to Jesus passages from the Prophets, which the context shows to have been fulfilled in other persons. The candid advocate must allow, that the application of some is far from obvious, and is open to critical difficulties; yet the same mode of applying Scripture is found in other parts of this very gospel, the authenticity of which has never been called in question, as the transfer to our Lord of the Psalmist's declaration¹, *I will open my mouth in parables*^m. An objector of equal candour must also grant, that the application is made after the manner of Jewish commentators; and if other arguments are of sufficient weight to establish the authenticity of the narrative, we are bound to acquiesce in the authority of an inspired author, though it may not be to our judgment convincing; for "the Lord seems purposely

^k Suetonius, Aug. 4. ¹ Psalm lxxviii. 2. ^m Matt. xiii. 35.

to cast an obscurity over some of the most remarkable predictions in Scripture, as a trial of our humility, and to prove whether we will receive and profit by what is obvious, though we cannot satisfactorily solve every difficulty, or whether we will proudly reject the whole on that accountⁿ." There are divines, whose orthodoxy is above suspicion, who consider several of the citations from the Old Testament in the New as accommodated to subjects which they were not intended to predict; as modern preachers, by detaching verses from the context, sometimes in their sermons give them a new and not strictly appropriate meaning. And "to deny this," says Dr. Pye Smith^o, "would be to refuse the Apostles and Evangelists that liberty of observing striking coincidences, and of making useful applications, which writers of all ages have exercised." But he proceeds with a caution against the abuse of the practice. "We should be slow to admit this solution, and well consider the probability, that in such cases there may be a ground of appropriation, the inobservance of which is solely owing to our ignorance of some circumstance in the *original* intent of the passage;" and he adds, "when it is introduced explicitly as an assertion of fact or doctrine, or as a prophecy, we must admit the propriety of the application, to the full extent to which it is carried by the sacred writer." Now the two citations, the application of which to Jesus we find most difficulty in allowing, are thus introduced, *that it might be fulfilled, Out of Egypt have I called my Son^p*; and, *then was fulfilled, In Rama there was a voice heard^q, &c.* A distinction has been made between these forms; and it is maintained, that the first indicates that the passage cited is a prophecy, the second that it is no more than an accommodation, and that

ⁿ Scott on Isaiah vii.

^o Scripture Testimony to the Messiah, i. p. 169.

^p Hosea xi. 1.

^q Jer. xxxi. 15.

in the same manner the Talmud and Rabbinical works use the one for proof, the other for illustration. The remark is not very satisfactory, and in the instances before us, the Evangelist's application of the passage in Hosea does not seem to be a more direct prophecy than that of Jeremiah. But this system, not so much of interpreting as explaining away the Scripture, will not be required here, if, as I conceive, the two passages may be shown to have had a double fulfilment, of which the secondary is the more important, and the more exact. The calling up out of Egypt, by the hands of Moses and Aaron, of Israel, God's adopted son, prefigured the future bringing up out of the same country of his real Son by generation; the one, to enter upon the possession of the earthly Canaan; the other, by his sufferings in the same land, to obtain for himself and his people a right to the enjoyment of its antitype, Heaven. The literal sense, says Lowth, "does more properly belong to Jesus than to Israel, which is observable in many other prophecies, which can be but improperly applied to those of whom they were first spoken, and, taking them in their true and genuine sense, are only fulfilled in Christ." Rachel, who lay buried between Rama and Bethlehem, is represented by Jeremiah as weeping and inconsolable for the death of her children. The primary reference appears to be to the Babylonian captivity; but the slaughter of the infants of Bethlehem, whom we may presume to be her descendants, since the town was on the confines of the tribe of her son Benjamin, now intermingled with that of Judah, is the full accomplishment of the prediction; and this is rendered the more probable to any one who will read through the chapter, which comforts both Israel and Judah with the promise of a better covenant, and includes that obscure intimation of the Messiah's miraculous conception, which I have already noticed.

He shall be called a Nazarene, presents a difficulty of

another description, for it is not found in the Old Testament. We know that in our Lord's time the bad character of the Nazarenes had become proverbial: for when Philip^r said to Nathaniel, *we have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write*, the reply even of that Israelite without guile was, *can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* It appears then, that the residence and presumed birth of Jesus in that town contributed to his rejection. The interpretation, therefore, which takes it as equivalent to a despised person, appears to be the best; and we shall allow, that in this sense he is virtually, though not actually, predicted in many passages as a Nazarene; and this view is supported by the language of the Evangelist, who does not refer to any specific passage, but generally to the Prophets.

St. Matthew expressly declares, that the naming of the Messiah Jesus, is the fulfilment of Isaiah's declaration to king Ahaz, that *the Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son*, and that *they shall call his name Immanuel, God with us*: and this celebrated prophecy has ever been regarded by the Church as evidence of the miraculous conception, and of the divine nature, of the promised Deliverer. Efforts were early made to deprive us of this valuable testimony; and the attempt has been zealously revived by modern Anti-Trinitarians. Thus Jewish critics have endeavoured to show, that *Almah*, the word that we render Virgin, is not necessarily restricted to this meaning; and Aquila, a proselyte from Christianity to Judaism in the second century, in his translation, substituted for the *παρθένος*, *virgin*, of the Septuagint, *νεᾱνίς*, *young woman*. I apprehend that the attempt is a failure, and that the ordinary interpretation must be retained; for a young woman's bearing a child is too common an event to have been called a sign, and would hardly have been announced with such solemnity. The

^r John i. 45.

advocates of this opinion differ with respect to the young woman intended; some supposing her to be the queen, and others the wife, of the prophet; but Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, to whom upon the first supposition it would be applied, had been born before, and as Isaiah calls Judæa *Emmanuel's land*, he cannot refer that title to a future child of his own. It is objected, that our Lord was never called Emmanuel; but it is well known, that, by a common figure of language not peculiar to Hebrew, it may mean that he shall be entitled to that appellation, that is, be what it denotes, *God manifest in the flesh*. He would be called by this name, as much as Solomon was by that of Jedidiah; and though it was not applied to him while on earth, he has been actually invoked under it in the hymns of many subsequent generations. Bishop Pearson considers it as comprehended in that of Jesus, for what else, says he, is *God with us*, than God our Saviour, which is the real meaning of Jesus? The objection appears to me to be frivolous, and the prophecy, as quoted by the Evangelist, would require no further vindication, did not the context involve it in difficulties; for it seems to declare that the Son promised should be born within the year, and that the political deliverance announced to Ahaz should take place before this Child should have reached the age in which it could discriminate between different kinds of food. When it is contended that this is a direct prophecy of the Messiah, the question arises, how an event that would not happen till more than seven centuries had elapsed, could be a sign or assurance of another event, which was to take place within three years. It may be answered, that the promise of his birth in a distant age included of necessity an assurance of the continuance of the nation which he was to rule, and of the royal house from which he was to spring, and was therefore, by inference, a sign of deliverance from the present Syrian invasion; and to strengthen this argument, it is main-

tained, that the sign was not intended for Ahaz himself, who refused to ask one, but for his remote descendants. Dr. Kennicott's paraphrase^s assumes that the text contains two distinct prophecies, to be understood in one sense only, the first relating to Christ, the second to Isaiah's own son. "*Behold, the Virgin* (the only one thus circumstanced) *shall conceive, and bear a Son, who shall be called Emmanuel*, God with us, and shall *eat milk and honey*, that is, the ordinary food of infants, *till he shall grow up, to know how to refuse the evil and choose the good*. But before this child (pointing to his own son, whom he might hold in his arms) *shall know how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings*. The child's name, Shear-Jashub, *the remainder shall return*, is evidently prophetic. The prophecy was soon after fulfilled, and therefore this son, whose name had been so consolatory the year before, might with the utmost propriety be brought forward now, to mark the period when Syria and Israel here spoken of as one kingdom, on account of their present confederacy, should be forsaken of both their kings, which, though at that time highly improbable, came to pass about two years after, when these two kings, who had in vain attempted to conquer Jerusalem, were themselves destroyed, each in his own country." The prophet was commanded to take this child with him, of whom no use was made unless in this application; and in the next chapter he declares, that both *his children were for signs*. Those who are dissatisfied with this assumed transition from the one child to the other, and think that the prediction requires that the sign should shortly take place, may approve of Dathe's interpretation, that Isaiah pointed out some virgin then present, who he prophesied should bring forth a son for a confirmation of the promise given, who would be a type of the Birth of Christ of the Virgin Mary, as the

^s Sermon on Is. vii. 13—16. before the University, 1765.

Brasen Serpent was of his Crucifixion, and Jonah of his three days' abode in the grave. The former is to me convincing, since it alone explains the conception of the Virgin, whom it is difficult to refer to any contemporary of the Prophet; and we should also bear in mind, that this declaration is not insulated, but is connected by the Prophet with the promise of that Son, who was to establish for ever the throne of David, and whom he calls Wonderful, and the Mighty God. And this connection satisfies me, that though we may not be able to remove all critical difficulties, it is a direct prediction of the miraculous conception and divine nature of our Saviour.

Whatever objections, however, may be urged against the application to our Lord of the other passages of the Prophets cited in these chapters by St. Matthew, it will be found impossible to explain away the plain declaration of Micah, which is referred to him by the Chaldee Targum, and the most eminent Jewish commentators, and is authenticated by that Jewish synod, as it may be called, convened by Herod, to ascertain his birth-place. This, in Dr. Hales's estimation, the most important single prophecy in the Old Testament respecting the personal character of the blessed Seed of the Woman, crowns the whole chain of prophecies descriptive of his several limitations to the line of Shem, to the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to the tribe of Judah, and to the royal house of David, terminating in his birth at Bethlehem, the city of that monarch. It forms, therefore, the basis of the New Testament, which begins with his human birth, the miraculous circumstances attending which are recorded in these two introductions. St. Matthew, however, quotes only the part of the prophecy which his purpose required; and I here insert the remainder, which as explicitly declares the eternal generation and consequently proper Deity of the Babe of Bethlehem, with which St. John begins his gospel, while the conclusion

carries us on to the conversion and restoration of all Israel to their own land, and his universal dominion even unto the ends of the earth.

*But his issuings forth are from old,
From days of eternity.
Therefore he will give them up [for a season]
Until the time that she which shall bear have borne.
Then shall the residue of thy brethren (the Jews) return
Along with the sons of Israel.
And he shall stand and guide them
In the strength of Jehovah,
In the majesty of the name of Jehovah his God;
And when they return he shall be magnified
Unto the ends of the earth^t.*

15. *The Ministry of John the Baptist. Matt. iii. Mark i.
Luke iii.*

Christ sent forth after his resurrection his Apostles *into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature*, but his own mission was confined to the *lost sheep of the house of Israel*. As a minister of the circumcision, our great High Priest entered upon his office at thirty years of age, the time appointed by the Law, and, like the typical priests of the order of Aaron, was consecrated by Baptism. His mission required to be notified and accredited, and John the Baptist had come into the world for the sole purpose of announcing him as the Messiah, and preparing the nation to receive him. Such a preparation which had not been required to introduce the former dispensation, marked the preeminence of this; and it was heightened still more by the fact, that the coming of this herald himself had been predicted by two Prophets; by Isaiah, as a Voice that was to proclaim the incarnate God; by Malachi, as the Messenger

^t This is Dr. Hales' translation. *Analysis of Chronology*, vol. ii. p. 463.

who was to prepare the way of Jehovah. With the promise of his coming as Elijah, he closes the volume of Prophecy, bidding the nation to remember the Law of Moses, since they would have no other guide during the dark period that was to precede the rising of *the Sun of Righteousness*. After this interval of centuries, the Spirit of Prophecy visited the Baptist's father, and he hinted the accomplishment of these predictions in his Child, whom he declared to be the Prophet of the Highest, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the remission of their sins. The person chosen was well fitted for his office by the austerity of his character and the self-denial of his life; but though a priest, he opened his preparatory commission, not in the temple, but in the wilderness. Men of all ranks, however different in conduct and opinion, flocked to him as a religious guide; and the reverence in which he was universally held would predispose all to receive his testimony. The predicted time also of the Messiah's advent was at hand, and therefore it is accurately specified by Luke. In the fifteenth year of the Emperor Tiberius^u, John, who was six months older than Jesus, began to prepare his way; and Greswell has with probability assigned for its commencement the fifth of October, (A.D. 26,) on which as he calculates he must have completed his thirtieth birth-day. In these thirty years the political state of the country had been totally changed. The Sceptre had passed away from Judah shortly after the birth of Shiloh, this Apostle of God *to whom it of right belonged*, by the death of Herod the Great; for though Herod Antipas and Philip retained

^u If we reckon his reign from the death of Augustus, Jesus would have been thirty-two years of age at his baptism, which does not seem reconcilable with the statement that he was *about* thirty; but the difficulty will be removed if the reign of Tiberius be dated from his predecessor's associating him with himself in the government two years earlier.

the portions of his kingdom which he had assigned to them, Archelaus, after a tyrannical administration, had been deposed and banished, and Judæa, Samaria, and Idumæa, his share, had been for twelve years avowedly a Roman province. The period is further marked by the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas. The Law acknowledged only one high priest; it is therefore supposed that Annas, who had been deposed A.D. 24, was now the deputy; but whether he enjoyed any real authority or not, his influence, as having had both sons and sons-in-law for successors, must have been great; and this appears from the fact, that Jesus on his arrest was taken not to the house of his son-in-law Caiaphas, but to his.

The duration of the Baptist's ministry is unknown. Some extend it to three years, others add to it another half year; but Greswell maintains that it is inconsistent with John's subordination to Christ, that his ministry should be as long as that of his superior; and argues, that as his only commission was to announce the Messiah, six months would be a sufficient period. He also thinks it incredible that John should have been baptizing three years before he was interrogated by the Sanhedrim. He concludes, that both would enter upon their offices at the same age; and supposing John's ministry succeeded by that of Christ, by allowing six months for that of the former and three complete years for that of the latter, he refers to them the half week of years in Daniel's prophecy.

At Bethabara, where the Israelites under Joshua had passed through the Jordan, the Baptist commenced his ministry, by inviting all their descendants to be baptized, calling upon them to renounce their sins and amend their lives, as the condition of their admission into the *kingdom of the Heavens*, which was about to be established. The phrase peculiar to Matthew is equivalent to *kingdom of God* used by the other Evangelists, and signifies the Church or

Congregation, that is, a society into which both Jews and Gentiles were to be *translated out of darkness*, and incorporated as the subjects of God's *dear Son*, who, if faithful to him on earth, would be finally admitted into glory and blessedness in heaven. The term is taken from Daniel's prophecy, and was understood to mean an universal temporal Sovereignty, the seat of which would be instead of Rome, Jerusalem. From the same prophecy the Jews had learnt to call its ruler *the Son of Man*, an equivocal title, as it had been applied to Ezekiel, to mark his low condition, as contrasted with angels, and it seems to indicate, that it would be in human nature that the Messiah would reign. It is a humbler appellation than that of *the Son of God*, and was therefore preferred by our Lord, but it is never given to him by others, nor does he use it after the Resurrection, so it seems to have an especial reference to his state of humiliation. In our own version, Βασιλεία is translated *kingdom*, and use reconciles us to the expression; but it is contrary to the idiom of our language, sounds harsh to a critical ear, and sometimes leads to misconception. We shall perceive this by substituting for it *reign*, for it is a reign that *comes*, and kingdom is the place where it prevails. This is apt to cause some confusion as to its locality, and to make the reader think of some distant unseen portion of the universe, instead of the very planet which he and his fellow-men inhabit. This reign is the grand subject of prophecy, and it was too frequently and too explicitly foretold not to be eagerly looked for by the Jews, who in their dispersion throughout the world had taught the Gentiles to entertain the same expectation. The coming of this *Desire of all nations*, this universal Sovereign, was the event to which all others were subordinate and introductory, for which even the world had been created, and the human race had been suffered in the person of the first man to fall from its original perfection. Adam on his creation was placed under the

covenant of works, *Do this, and thou shalt live*; but when he brake it by disobedience for himself and his posterity, the Covenant of faith, *Believe, and thou shalt be saved*, was substituted as the remedial system to restore them through repentance and reliance on a Deliverer from the guilt and power of sin, to the favour of their Creator. From that day the government of our world had been placed under the Son of God, who showed himself occasionally to a favoured few in the appearance of our nature, which in the fulness of time he was to unite with his Deity, so that he might reign as the Son of Man for the benefit of his people. It pleased the Father from the beginning that there should be always *a seed to serve him*, reduced at one time to a single household, but afterwards expanding into a nation, yet still that nation when most numerous bore a small proportion to the human race. Palestine, the seat of light in the midst of surrounding darkness, where God was worshipped according to the ritual he had prescribed, while the rest of mankind were the slaves of cruel and licentious idols, is described as a vineyard, the portion of an estate which the owner esteems most valuable, and cultivates with peculiar care. This figure was familiar to the Jews, as it had been explained by Isaiah^x, that *the vineyard of the Lord of hosts was the house of Israel*, and was recognised by them, and used by our Lord in this sense in his parables. Within this inclosure Jehovah reigned as a King, by a sensible manifestation of his Providence; still the regions beyond were not neglected, and were as really, though not so apparently, under his government. The Bible differs from all other records in laying open the secret causes of events; the revolutions of empires are ascribed by other historians to human power and sagacity, but we learn from the inspired volume, that it is the Most High *who ruleth in the kingdom of men, and appointeth over it whomsoever he will*, and that *he putteth*

^x Isaiah v. 7.

down one and setteth up another, in order to prepare and establish the Redeemer's reign. With this guide we perceive, in what appears to others a fortuitous succession of events, an harmonious scheme, and from the glimpses of it which we can discover, believe that the whole is the arrangement of perfect wisdom and benevolence. This consolatory doctrine, which we may collect from the other books of Scripture, is clearly developed in that of Daniel, who was favoured in a dream with a view of the symbols of four empires which were to succeed each other, till the universal dominion *over all nations and languages, never to be destroyed*, for the bringing in of which all these were preparatory, was to be given to *the Son of Man*.

And not only was this reign prepared and foretold. As the time drew nigh, the Baptist was sent to qualify its subjects for it, and to correct their notions, for they misconceived the character both of the Sovereign who was to establish it, not as a conqueror *by might or by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts*; and of the Sovereignty itself, for he came not at his first advent, as they vainly flattered themselves, to make the Gentiles their subjects, but to subdue the passions, to regulate the will, to bring aspiring imaginations into captivity, and, without interfering with earthly distinctions, *to purify to himself*, out of Jews and Gentiles, *a peculiar people, zealous of good works*. They had also mistaken the time, and therefore the Sovereign, to show that at his first coming he did not mean to assume this government, made exactly the same proclamation as his herald; *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. His Ministry, for he came at first *not to be ministered to, but to minister*, was under the Jewish dispensation; his reign did not commence till the day of Pentecost, when he sent down the gift of the Holy Spirit, which he had purchased by his death, and began to exercise the power which he had obtained on his resurrection, and will retain till the object for which he

reigns has been accomplished, when *he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father, that God may be all in all*. His Sovereignty, *beginning at Jerusalem*, gradually prevailed, till it had overturned the ancient Idolatry, and silenced Philosophy, and had taken possession of the Roman empire. It advanced into the barbarous regions beyond; but has since receded before Mahometanism in the ancient seats of learning, Egypt and Greece, and been enslaved in its birthplace, Judæa, although retaining in the body of the people many adherents. With this exception, and that of India and China, where it has also converts enough to prove that it is as able to triumph over their polytheism, as over Greek and Roman forms of error, it now occupies all the civilized portions of the globe. Our increasing knowledge of its surface has discovered millions of Pagans, to few of whom it has even been proclaimed, and Christianity is not yet the professed religion of the majority of mankind. Still, though its progress is slow, it is advancing, and, according to the sure word of prophecy, must spread from land to land, till *all the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ*. His religion is established in Christendom, and is professed by many beyond its limits; and he reigns in the hearts of his faithful subjects, directing all things to their real, though not always to their apparent, benefit.

Hitherto, however, his reign has been indirect, administered by kings and priests; and we and many preceding generations have been led to suppose, that it will be always the same in nature, though far superior in degree; and that the Spirit of grace being poured out more abundantly, and upon many more the zeal for extending the Redeemer's kingdom, will spread and become general, and we shall, as it were, imperceptibly glide into a millenium of piety and purity and peace, when through the agency of missionaries and the diffusion of tracts, and, above all, of the word of

God, *the world shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.* But prophecy seems plainly to describe a tremendous and final conflict with the powers of darkness, in which many will fail, and the righteous with difficulty shall stand, which is to usher in that happy æra; and it was the belief of the early Christians, that it was not to be always invisible and spiritual, but that in due time the *Lord of hosts would actually reign gloriously on Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem.* "The orthodox," writes Justin Martyr, in the East, in the second century, "know that there will be a Resurrection of the Flesh, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, rebuilt, adorned, and enlarged, according to the joint declarations of Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the other Prophets." In the West, Tertullian, half a century later, maintained the same opinion. "In this kingdom upon earth, antecedent to the kingdom in Heaven, God has provided for the reception of the Saints, for refreshing them with abundance of spiritual goods, as a compensation for those which they have disregarded or lost in this world." The carnal abuse of this doctrine by subsequent writers, who described it by anticipation as a Mahometan paradise, brought it into discredit. It was again revived at the Reformation, but the gross excesses of the German Anabaptists soon ended in the extinction both of their profligate kingdom, and in the rejection of the doctrine which they had so flagrantly corrupted. King Edward's Catechism expressly teaches, that when we pray, "Thy Kingdom come, we desire that Christ may reign with his Saints, and be Lord in the world." But this doctrine did not reappear when Protestantism was restored by Elizabeth, and was forgotten here and on the continent till revived by Mede in his Latin key to the Apocalypse, in the reign of Charles the First. Bishop Newton, in his Dissertations on the Prophecies, rendered it accessible to the general reader, and, with the increasing study of unfulfilled prophecy, it

has been adopted by many who were originally prejudiced against it. They maintain, that on the expiration of the 1260 days, during which the Church is banished into the wilderness, it will not only be purified from every error, and triumph over every foe, but that its Lord and Saviour will literally fulfil the predictions of the Scripture, by reigning as a Man on the throne of David at Jerusalem. Such is the conclusion drawn from a careful comparison of numerous passages, by many divines who have not on other points given way to imagination; and no candid reader can, I think, deny, that there is great weight in their arguments, or that it is probable, as the end of this Dispensation draws nearer, believers should be permitted to form clearer views of the future. And certainly this view is becoming more prevalent with the students of prophecy; and for myself I must confess, that since the first edition, any other interpretation now appears to me forced and unnatural, and such as no critic would endure in any other ancient text; for while we literally explain the judgments threatened to Israel, which indeed are so fulfilled under our eyes, we deprive them of the promises which we transfer to ourselves, actually taking Zion for the Church, though the promise, *the gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising*, implies as strongly a reference to two parties, as his *being wounded for our transgressions*, and that *by his stripes we are healed*. Nevertheless, there are also passages unfavourable to this literal interpretation, especially those in which sacrificial worship is connected with Israel, in a converted state, dwelling in the promised land: and other objections of various kinds will occur to the thoughtful and spiritual Christian. The fundamental doctrines of our holy faith are so clearly revealed in Scripture, that he *may run who readeth*; but a partial veil is thrown over some subjects, so that they can be but indistinctly discerned. Our Lord's personal reign

appears to me to be one on which his followers may be allowed to differ, for certainly, if true, it cannot be essential, since it has been unknown to so many saints in so many ages of the Church. Happily there can be no difference of opinion as to the qualities which he requires in his people, and all agree that in due time, the *pure in heart*, the humble, the faithful, and the obedient, will see *the King in his beauty*; but whether, when he comes, it will be to take them to heaven, or to reign with them on earth, is, I conceive, not material for us to ascertain; for in either, happiness can be found only in his presence. If admitted *to see him as he is, we shall be like him* in body and in soul, and if we be with him and be like him, it is of no importance in what locality we are to serve him, and to enjoy his presence.

As Jesus announced to his contemporaries his approaching reign, and as his miracles proved that he could take possession of his Sovereignty whenever he pleased, it is not surprising that both his disciples and the people should be impatiently expecting this event. It became therefore expedient to correct this mistake, and to show them that the Messiah must suffer before he could enter into glory; but this was an unwelcome truth, which neither could as yet bear. He accordingly conveyed it indirectly, and made it the main subject of many parables, by which he contrived with more than human skill at the same time to teach and warn the individuals of all succeeding generations. The Baptist's call upon his countrymen ought also to have taught them, that the kingdom for which reformation was the qualification must be of a spiritual nature. These who aspired to be subjects of it he prepared by Baptism, a rite by which proselytes were received into the Jewish Church, but which had never before been administered to those who were entitled to be members of it by birth, and had been admitted into it by circumcision. The Israelites, however, had been called upon to sanctify themselves by

washing their clothes^y, and, we may presume, their bodies also, before the Law was announced to them by Moses; and this second national Baptism may be considered as preparatory to the Messiah's dispensation. It implied, that they too were sinners, obnoxious to the Divine wrath, who notwithstanding the privilege they enjoyed of being in covenant with God, required as well as the heathens to be washed in *the fountain* which was about to be *opened for sin and for uncleanness*^z. John administered this rite to those who confessed their sins, but he had not authority to forgive them; and they who submitted to it, indicated, by thus *putting away the filth of the flesh*, that they needed and expected a more efficacious baptism which should purify and save the soul. It was natural that his countrymen should ask the Baptist who he was, and why he baptized; and their manner of questioning him shows, that they expected that the Messiah would introduce his religion by this ceremony. He allows that their expectation was correct, but he is careful to mark the distinction between the Baptisms of the two, which in their administration was to the senses the same. Repentance, and renunciation of sin, was the qualification for both; but his was only *an Ordinance*, a sign of the purity which the Messiah requires in his subjects; Christian Baptism a *Sacrament*, which, when "rightly received," conveys it.

Baptism is one of the terms consecrated by use, which our translators were commanded to retain, and its meaning has been keenly disputed. In some passages it means no doubt *immersion*, yet *aspersion* would seem to be a better rendering in others, in which the baptism of the Holy Spirit is sometimes represented by sprinkling and pouring; *Then I will sprinkle pure water upon you, and ye shall be cleansed from all your defilements*^a. *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out my Spirit upon all*

^y Exodus xix. 10.^z Zech. xiii. 1.^a Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

flesh^b. The spot chosen by the Baptist on the banks of the river, and the observation that he baptized at *Ænon*^c, *because there was much water there*, seem to prove that he administered it by immersion; and this mode, which so significantly represents *our death unto sin and our rising to newness of life*, was that of the primitive Christians, who, to use St. Paul's expression, *were buried in baptism* with their Lord. Still aspersion was used from the beginning when required by illness or convenience; and we can hardly imagine, that the three thousand converted on the day of Pentecost, or the jailor and his family in the prison of Philippi, were baptized in any other manner. In our country it has, though not countenanced by the Prayer Book, become universal. But this deviation from the original practice need not cause us any uneasiness, since it is reasonable to believe that Christ, who looks to the spirit and not to the letter, has granted to the ministers of his Church discretion in the circumstantialia of both Sacraments.

The chief parties into which the nation was divided, the Sadducees and Pharisees, equally came to John's baptism. The former were called after Sadoc, a pupil of Antiochus Sochoeus, president of the great council, who had flourished two centuries and a half before. He is said to have inferred that there was no future state, from a misconception of the doctrine of his master, who, inculcating duty, rejected the powerful, but as he conceived unworthy, motives of fear and hope. They adhered exclusively to the letter of the Law; rejecting traditionary interpretation and enlargement of it: they undervalued, (if they did not, like the Samaritans, reject,) the rest of the Old Testament, and did not believe in the Resurrection, or in the existence of angels, or a superintending Providence. The latter, who are supposed to have sprung up soon after, derived their name from *pharass*, to *separate*, because they separated

^b Joel ii. 28.

^c John iii. 23.

themselves from others, to a life of professed sanctity; but while strict in their performance of rites and ceremonies, they were lax in the interpretation of moral precepts, the force of many of which they contrived to explain away. They maintained that Moses, in addition to the Law which he had committed to writing, had received oral instructions in the mount, which had been carefully transmitted from generation to generation; and these traditions, which were chiefly of a ceremonial nature, (as the washing of hands and cups, and a punctilious payment of tithes of the most trifling articles,) they too often made to supersede the weightier matters of morality. The principle also on which they acted was reprehensible, for their motive was the praise that cometh not of God but of men. They therefore made long prayers in public, were ostentatious in almsgiving, showed by their appearance when they fasted, and wore broader phylacteries and larger fringes than others^d. The religion of many of them we know to have been a mask, under which they were enabled to indulge more freely in covetousness, arrogance, and other sinful propensities; for they are reproved by our Lord as hypocrites, and with more severity than their rivals. Some no doubt deceived themselves; and there were others, like St. Paul, exceptions, who, *according to the righteousness of the Law blameless*, held the principles of *this straitest sect* of Judaism, without being tainted by the abuses it had a tendency to generate. They acknowledged the immortality

^d The phylacteries were pieces of parchment inscribed with four paragraphs from the Law, Exodus xi. 1—10. xiii. 11—16. Deut. vi. 4—9. xi. 13—21. which the Jews, interpreting literally the injunction to bind the words of the Law as a sign on their hands, and as frontlets between their eyes, wore about their persons. They were also commanded (Numb. xv. 38.) to wear fringes or borders to their cloaks, and those who wished to appear more devout than their neighbours, made them larger, that they might be more conspicuous.

of the soul, which, like the Greek philosophers, they connected with its pre-existence^e; and with Pythagoras they believed that on leaving the body it transmigrated in succession into other individuals. From the prevalence of this doctrine arose the supposition, that Jesus was the Baptist risen from the dead; and probably the question, *did this man sin, or his parents, that he was born blind?* While the Pharisees, who were superstitious and uncharitable bigots, rested in complacency in their presumed holiness, trusting that they were righteous, and despising others, the Sadducees were men of the world. The first were the favourites of the people; the latter, fewer in number, were generally of rank and fortune, and did not seek public offices. According to Josephus, scarcely any of the business of the state was transacted by them; and when in the magistracy, they were obliged to accommodate themselves to the opinions of the Pharisees, that the populace might tolerate them. We call them Sects, but Party is a more proper word, for both conformed to the national worship; they therefore resemble the monastic orders of Rome, rather than what in modern language we understand by sectaries. The Sadducees believed too little, the Pharisees too much, and both from different causes were equally distant from the kingdom of Heaven. The first were men of pleasure, the latter religious formalists. There is also mention in the gospels of Scribes and Lawyers, which appear to be synonymous terms for one order, as they are used indifferently^f. The first name they derived from their original occupation of transcribing the Law, the other from the interpretation of it to which that gradually led. Our Lord seems to acknowledge their right to teach, and their fidelity in the office, while he condemns their

^e Such is the testimony of Josephus, (A. ii. 18.) and long before the author of the apocryphal book of Wisdom had said, *Being good, I came into a body undefiled.* viii. 20. ^f Matt. xxii. 35. Mark xii. 28.

practice; and from this and other facts, we conclude that they were the Levites, who are not mentioned under that name in the New Testament, on whom devolved the instruction of the people, and the administration of justice, while the Priests were restricted to the services of the Temple. In their opinions they agreed with the Pharisees. We also read in three places of Herodians, who appear to have been Herod's partisans, and who, like him, accommodated themselves in a degree to the idolatrous practices of the Romans. As they were opposed to the Pharisees in recommending submission to existing authorities, and as their leaven, that is their doctrine^g, is called that of the Sadducees^h, we infer that the religious opinions of the two were the same.

The Baptist, who was an intrepid reprover of vice, addressed both Pharisees and Sadducees as a *generation of vipers*, by which he seems to designate them, in contradiction to the title of which they boasted, descendants of Abraham, as children of the old serpent the Devil, as Christ afterwards expressly called them. John enquired with astonishment, *who had warned them to flee from the impendingⁱ wrath*. Neither, therefore, came in a proper frame of mind; the one were as proud of their presumed piety and virtue, as the other of superiority to vulgar prejudices; and formalist and sensualist were alike unprepared to welcome a holy, humble, self-denying Messiah. Probably expecting his immediate reign, they thought it necessary to submit to Baptism as an appointed ceremony, without any desire of the internal purification, which it was designed to denote and recommend. As some, however, might have been impressed and affected by his preaching, the Baptist did not require mere [μεταμέλεια] sorrow for sin, but [μετάνοια] change of mind, which *worketh out reformation^k not to be repented of*. He exposed

^g Mark viii. 15.

^h Matt. xvi. 6.

ⁱ wrath to come, A. T.

^k repentance, A. T.

the vanity of their reliance upon their descent from the father of the faithful, as entitling them, though so unlike him in character, to an entrance into this kingdom, by declaring that God's purpose would not be frustrated by their rejection, as *he could*, if necessary, *raise up* unto him *children out of the stones* lying before them. *The axe*, he continued, is *lying at the root of the trees* about to be felled, and by this figurative language he warned them that their reformation must be immediate.

His preaching brought conviction to the consciences of many of his hearers, and led them to seek directions for their conduct. John had renounced the world from his youth, and resided in the wilderness as a hermit. Such a course of mortification and religious contemplation has often been recommended as more excellent than the diligent fulfilment of the duties of active life; but it is not encouraged by the Scriptures, which teach us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, not to withdraw from it. The nature of his mission required and justified it in John, but he did not hold it forth for imitation, enforcing only on those, who were struck by a sense of guilt, the duties of justice and benevolence. To those of benevolence he exhorted the people, *he that hath two coats, let him share with him that hath none; and let him that hath food do likewise*. To those of justice, in which they were the most deficient, the soldiers and the farmers of the taxes; and he gave to each class specific instructions, suited to its besetting temptations. The soldiers then on service (*στρατευόμενοι*, not *στρατιῶται*) he charged to be content with their pay, neither seizing property by force, nor obtaining it fraudulently; and the publicans he required not to exact *more than their due*. It is worthy of notice, that he does not condemn the profession of either, though that of the latter was held unlawful by many in his time, and that of the former is by many in ours. Isaiah had foretold that a Voice should cry in the wilderness,

Prepare ye the way of Jehovah, make straight in the desert a highway for our God; and this prediction the Baptist applied to himself. No one who heard him, therefore, could doubt that the Messiah would be Jehovah, who had ever been the King of Israel, and the preparation to be made was worthy of such a Sovereign; for as pioneers used to precede a monarch, to prepare for him, by filling up valleys and lowering heights, a straight and smooth highway; so by casting down the imaginations of the proud, and by raising the humble and contrite, a people would be formed disposed to welcome and obey their incarnate God.

John is well characterised by the prophet as a Voice, for the sole object of his commission was to proclaim the Messiah. He was faithful in discharging it, for he disclaimed the honours which his hearers were ready to bestow, and directed them to the *Light, to bear witness to which he was sent*. His witness comprehends the divinity, as well as the authority, of the Messiah; for he declares, *that he existed before him*, which it was evident could not have been in this world, and that himself was not worthy to *bear or unloose his sandals*, the office of the lowest servant, although Jesus bore witness to him afterwards, that he was inferior to none of the human race. He also strongly marked the inferiority of his own baptism to that of Christ, by contrasting water, which cleans the surface, with fire, which refines and purifies the substance. He *shall baptize with the Holy Ghost*, which he adds, assigns to that baptism an efficacy which his own could only prefigure; and he shows by the comparison of him to the husbandman, who separates the wheat and the chaff by winnowing, that while the penitent are preserved, the incorrigible will be punished. The impending wrath from which the Baptist warned his hearers to flee was temporal, but like other scriptural warnings it comprehends the final and unalterable decision of the day of Judgment.

The opponents of Christianity are pleased to assume as an incontrovertible truth, that repentance and amendment of life must restore a sinner to the Divine favour; yet reasoning can establish no connection between the two; experience, as far as it goes, tends to prove, that repentance cannot remove the effects of past transgression, and this conjecture, for it is no more, is contradicted by the natural feelings of mankind, who, under every form of religion savage or civilized, have endeavoured by sacrifices, often even of human victims, to appease an offended Deity, whom conscience represented as an object not of love, but of fear. Historians and travellers of all ages prove an universal persuasion, handed down no doubt from tradition, *that without shedding of blood there is no remission*¹. However we may speculate, God alone can determine what He will accept as a satisfaction for the violation of his laws. If repentance could expiate our transgressions, surely the doctrine would have been revealed by him who came on purpose to preach repentance. But though he enjoins it as an indispensable duty, he never represents it as meriting pardon, but points to the Lamb of God as *taking away the sin of the world*. "Those that can imagine the removal of the guilt of the least sin feasible by the choicest and most religious of their own works, never as yet knew God truly, nor themselves, nor their sins; they never understood the fiery strictness of the Law, nor the spirituality of the Gospel.... In Christ alone is that *Fountain that is opened for sin and uncleanness*. . . . It is from his crucified side that there must issue both blood to expiate, and water to cleanse our impieties^m. Most professors, in all their works of repentance, sorrow, and humiliation, are too, too apt secretly to think that they make God some amends for their sins. But this conception is most dangerous to the soul, and dishonourable to God, as being absolutely

¹ See Bp. Porteus's Lectures on St. Matthew, vol. i. p. 84.

^m South's Sermon on 1 John iii. 3.

and diametrically opposite to the tenor of the Gospel, for it causes us, while we acknowledge a Christ, tacitly to deny a Saviour. And herein is the art and policy of the Devil seen, who will keep back the sinner as long as he can from the duties of repentance and humiliation, and when he can do this no longer, he will endeavour to make him trust and confide in them. But let this persuasion still remain fixed upon our spirits, that repentance was enjoined the sinner as a duty, not as a recompense, and that the most we can do for God, cannot countervail the least we have done against him. Nothing can cleanse the soul but that blood that redeemed the soul; and the only repentance that deserves the name, is itself one of the spiritual gifts which Jesus hath been exalted to the right hand of the Father to bestowⁿ."

PART II.

16. *Jesus comes to John for Baptism. Matt. iii. Mark i. Luke iii.*

WHEN the national expectation had been sufficiently raised by John, this superior Teacher, whom he came to announce, suddenly offered himself for baptism. Jesus was then beginning to be about thirty years of age; we may then conclude, that, as if born in the spring he would have completed that period at the passover of A.D. 27, April 9, he was baptized early in the same year. Being free from sin, he could not repent, and needed no reformation. Notwithstanding, he thought fit to honour John's baptism as a divine institution; and though in himself of immaculate purity, deriving no taint from Adam, it might become him, as the representative of his corrupt race, to be baptized as well as circumcised. John, conscious both of the purity of character and preeminent dignity of Jesus, hesitated to perform an office, which seemed to mark superiority; nor

ⁿ South's Sermon on 1 John iii. 1.

did he consent, till admonished that it was an ordinance which it became them both to fulfil. The reason has not been recorded, but it may be considered as a formal consecration of the Messiah to his office, in the same manner as, under the ancient dispensation, the high priest required ablution, previous to his inauguration. When John afterwards announced him to his disciples as *the Lamb of God*, he declared that he knew him not till the Spirit pointed him out as such, by descending and remaining on him. Some, taking the expression in the strictest sense, suppose, that, though they were relations, and their mothers friends, it was arranged by Divine Providence that they should have no personal acquaintance, that the Baptist's testimony might be placed beyond suspicion. Yet, upon this supposition, it is not easy to conceive why he should have hesitated to baptize him, as the sign was given afterwards, and Jesus must have appeared to him as requiring baptism as much as any other Israelite. The apparent dissonance between the Evangelists Matthew and John may be satisfactorily reconciled, by distinguishing between knowledge of the person and of the office. Thus the Jews knew Jesus as the reputed Nazarene, the son of Joseph, but not as the Christ; Jesus himself said afterwards, *Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip*^a? and in the same manner the Baptist might know Jesus, and know him so well as to be convinced from his moral excellence, that he needed not to be baptized, and *bring forth fruits of repentance*, and yet not be aware that he was born to be King of the Jews. As Jesus went up straightway from the river, he prayed, probably for the influence of the Spirit to render his ministry acceptable and efficacious, and the heavens were opened; which seems to mean, that the glory, or bright light, which usually accompanied a manifestation of the Deity, appeared. The Holy Spirit now descended, as it were with the motion

^a John xiv. 9.

of a dove, while a voice proclaimed, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. Thus, in the baptism of our great High Priest, there was an exhibition to the senses of the Three Persons in the ever-blessed Trinity, each acting according to the economy of the scheme of redemption, the Father appointing the Son to be Mediator, the Son accepting the appointment, and the Holy Spirit anointing him *with the oil of gladness above his fellows*, and so qualifying him for the work he had undertaken. It is, I believe, the general opinion, that a dove actually appeared; but others, who seem supported by the original text^b, refer the resemblance to its fluttering motion, and take the appearance to have been such a lambent flame, as settled on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Henceforth the Spirit rested upon our Lord's human nature in all its fulness, being not given to him by measure, as to his apostles, to whom these gifts were divided. This voice was heard at the Transfiguration, and, for the third time, at the close of his ministry, after he had been proclaimed by the multitude the Christ, when for their sakes, to confirm their faith, he prayed in their hearing, *Father, glorify thy Name*. Thus was our Lord consecrated to his high office, by one who was honoured by the whole nation; and God confirmed the appointment, I apprehend, in the presence of the Baptist alone; for it does not seem likely that such a manifestation should have been vouchsafed to the multitude, especially as Jesus afterwards tells the Jews that they had not heard his Father's voice.

17. *The Temptation.* Matt. iv. Mark i. Luke iv.

An interval of solitary meditation was a suitable preparation for the duties of a laborious, painful, and difficult course. The Spirit therefore impelled the beloved Son of God to withdraw into the desert; and here, like Moses

^b ὥσεὶ περιστεράν.

previous to his receiving the Law, and Elijah when called upon to restore it, he endured a fast of forty days among wild animals, far from the haunts of men. Fasting and Prayer, which in the Bible are so often found united, have been dissevered in modern times, and it was no doubt the abuse of the former that led to its disuse. Its beneficial moral effect, however, when properly regulated, and its suitability to seasons of private or public calamity, cannot be denied; and we may learn from instances in the life of our great Example, and from the fact that the Christians of Antioch^c, before they sent forth the first Mission, fasted as well as prayed, that the two would be the best commencement of any important undertaking. During the whole of this period Jesus was tempted by the evil Spirit; but only the three assaults with which he tried him at its expiration are recorded, either as more violent than his other wicked suggestions, or as more suitable for our instruction, as we here see our Master's triumph over the *lust of the flesh*, the *lust of the eyes*, and the *pride of life*. The conflict had no human witness: it must therefore have been revealed at the proper season, in order to be recorded for the edification of the Church; and though we pretend not to be able to fathom the depths of this mysterious transaction, we can perceive with the light afforded us by the epistle to the Hebrews, that it *behoved* our Saviour in this, as in other respects, to be *made like unto his brethren*; and that as our progenitors yielded to the first temptation, and thereby transmitted to their whole posterity their depraved nature, it was fit that our new federal Head should, before entering upon his office, encounter and triumph over the Tempter. We are hereby taught, that there is no impiety so gross which the devil will not tempt the best of men to commit; and we have the consolation of knowing, that our Master has had an experimental knowledge of the temptations that

^c Acts xiii. 2.

try his people, and that he is not only able, having been proved to be without sin, *to succour them that are tempted*, but, as *he suffered, being tempted*, that he can also sympathize *with the feeling of our infirmities*. The suggestions of the Tempter would cause him distress in proportion to his perfection; and our gratitude is strengthened by this record of what he unseen endured for us, in addition to these sufferings that met the public eye. His great example teaches us, when exposed to the *fiery darts* of the spiritual adversary, to resist him by watchfulness, prayer, and a right use of the word of God.

The perfect human nature of our Lord was incapable of sinful thoughts; and this is sufficient answer to those, who would explain the Temptation as an allegorical representation of the suggestions that occurred to him, to abuse his delegated power as the means of personal gratification. Others conceive, that the whole passed in a vision; but as there is no intimation that favours this opinion in any of the three narratives, there is reason to believe that both this Temptation and that in the garden of Eden were real, and it seems fit that both should be considered as similar transactions. The Devil then, we believe, now showed himself in a visible and probably a human form; he knew that the fate of man depended upon the conduct of his representative, and that by his failure, the scheme of redemption would be frustrated. Our Lord's appetite returned, in a place where food could not be procured by ordinary means, and no bodily suffering is probably more severe than extreme hunger. How great then is the trial to one who can in an instant remove it! The evil Spirit, called in this narrative by the three names that characterise him, the Tempter, the Accuser, and the Enemy, chose therefore this crisis for his most subtle assault. The first Adam had been tempted in a garden, and prevailed upon to eat one forbidden fruit, when he might innocently have satisfied

his appetite with all the rest; but the second Adam met the enemy in a barren wilderness where there was none, and thus gave him a great advantage. Satan tempted him to distrust the providence of God, and to provide for his support by the miraculous power with which he had been entrusted, not for his own use, but for the promotion of the work which he had undertaken. He insidiously transformed himself, as it were, into an angel of light. The danger of the temptation appears in its plausibility; Satan did not urge Jesus to create a feast for indulgence, but to change a stone into a loaf, that he might not perish with hunger, and might satisfy himself that he had not been mistaken in supposing he was *the Son of God*. Consent would have shown distrust of God's providence and promise, and a disposition to use improper means of relief. It was his duty to wait patiently, as Jesus told him in the words of the Law. The life of man depends upon the will of God; he can find food for him, or, if he pleases, even support him without it. As in other quotations in the New Testament, the force of the reply is not fully perceived without a reference to the context. The chosen people, with a promise of entering Canaan, were also in a desert, which could not maintain them by its produce, and therefore they were for years supported by miracle. *He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know, that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*^d. The reply repelled the Temptation, and the Tempter was overcome by the *sword of the Spirit*. We perceive that the Devil is too crafty to begin by tempting established believers to gross and evident wickedness; and when he finds them still relying, notwithstanding their distress and difficulties, upon God, determined to suffer

^d Deut. viii. 3.

rather than seek relief by sin, he changes his ground. Thus in the second temptation of our Lord, by a garbled quotation from Scripture, (omitting, *to keep thee in all thy ways*,) since by Scripture he had been defeated, he tempted him, whom he could not persuade to distrust, to the opposite sin of presumption, saying, *if thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.* He took Jesus along with him for the purpose to the roof of the Temple, and urged him to throw himself down, and so to appear to the people suspended in the air, as their long-expected Son of Man *coming in the clouds of heaven*, and affording them the sign they afterwards demanded so often. That this was Satan's design may be collected from the fact, that the Temple, not the wilderness, was the scene of this temptation. Such a deed would have been ostentatious, and an unwarranted demand of a miracle for his preservation from danger wantonly incurred through the desire of display. It was also putting to the proof the faithfulness of God. Jesus therefore answered the enemy by another quotation from the same book of Deuteronomy, which plainly forbids men to tempt the Lord their God, by unnecessary appeals to his providential care. The last recorded temptation is the offer of empire, addressed, it should seem, not to ambition only, but to every passion that can be gratified by the unlimited possession of all the objects of sense, which an absolute sovereign may claim. When we consider how many hopeful Christians have sacrificed their consciences even for a small share of the enjoyments, the power, or the praise of the world, we may appreciate in some degree the attraction of all, to men irresistible, unless restrained by grace, and we shall thankfully use the petition recommended by our tempted Master, who perfectly knew our nature, *Lead us not into temptation.* The Devil,

defeated in the former instances, seems to have despaired of success by any covert temptation, and to have resolved to make one bold effort, grounding his hope upon the vastness of the recompense which he proposed as the price of a transient act of worship. He therefore conveyed him to a mountain, from which, like Moses, he might have a view of the whole promised land, for this appears to be the empire Satan offered him. It was not, indeed, the deceiver's to give, but already by right his own, as well as the sovereignty of the whole world, although to be acquired only through his voluntary humiliation. Whatever disguise the Devil had before assumed, his own proposal must now have unmasked him. Jesus therefore addressed him by his name of Satan, (that is, enemy, in old English as in modern German, fiend,) and commanded him to depart immediately, for it was written, that God alone should be worshipped. Thus baffled, he left him, but only for a season; for he tempted him again, if not in person, through others; and we are taught by our Lord's example, that if we *resist the Devil, he will flee from us*. Angels then came to rejoice in his triumph, and to pay him a willing homage, far more satisfactory than that which even an universal emperor could have received from slaves, and to supply his wants, an act which shows his pre-eminence above every creature.

The two Evangelists, though they give substantially the same account, and often use the same words, record the temptations in a different order, the latter joining together the two in the wilderness. With the majority of harmonists, I prefer that of St. Matthew, for it does not seem likely that the Devil should have left Jesus on the roof of the Temple; and there is an obvious opposition between the trial there and the first two, neither of which would, so manifestly as the last, betray the nature of the tempter. I transcribe Mr. Greswell's ingenious reason for this trans-

position of St. Luke. "The first temptation is addressed to the purely sensual principle, the second to the purely intellectual principle, the third to the two combined: the proximate cause of the first we know was hunger; that of the second, we may reasonably conjecture, the voice from heaven at our Lord's Baptism; and that of the third, the expectation of a temporal Messiah: the object of the first two was to discover whether Jesus was the Son of God; that of the third, whether he was the true Christ. If so, it would appear to be the strongest in the eyes of the Jews, because a temptation to avow himself such a Messiah as they expected and desired; but to the Gentiles it would seem to be simply addressed to ambition, and of inferior strength to the second, and therefore one writing for Gentiles, would be likely to place it first." It is remarkable, that he was afterwards twice assailed by the temptation of worldly grandeur; first by his own disciple Peter, whom he rebuked in the same terms as he did Satan on this occasion; and again, when the multitude, persuaded by his miraculous feeding five thousand persons that he was the Prophet whose coming Moses had foretold, intended to take him by force, to make him their King.

18. *The Testimony of the Baptist to Jesus.* John i. 19—52.

The fame of John's Baptism had attracted the notice of the Sanhedrim, and they sent a deputation of Priests and Levites of the sect of the Pharisees, to enquire whether he were himself the expected Messiah. This he plainly denied, and answered also in the negative their next enquiries, if he were Elijah, or the Prophet; for it was the received opinion that the Messiah was to be preceded both by the former, who would return from heaven, and by Jeremiah, who would for this purpose be restored to life. This may appear contradictory to our Saviour's subsequent testimony, that the Baptist was Elijah; but if John had

allowed it, he would have misled them, as they understood Malachi meant the Tishbite himself, not a teacher of his appearance and character, and therefore he answered in the sense of the proposers of the question. Being then asked who he was, he answered as before, the Herald of the Messiah; whom he now declared, though they did not know him to be actually in the midst of them. The day after their departure, Jesus returned from the desert, and John, seeing him approaching, pointed him out to his disciples and the multitude as *the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world*. The comprehensiveness of the expression is most remarkable, not sin, or the sin of Israel, but of the whole world. This doctrine was a stumblingblock to the Jew, and even to Christ's Apostles after the Resurrection. It was *this secret*, *Christ the hope of glory* to the Gentiles, for which Paul suffered imprisonment, and was thought by his countrymen to be unworthy to live; yet here it is plainly asserted by the Baptist; nor need this superior knowledge surprise or perplex us, as it has done some commentators, since we know from St. Luke that he was filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth. The innocence of the Lamb is proverbial, and our Redeemer was *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners*. The Baptist, however, did not refer to the purity of his life, but to the efficacy of his atoning death, thus intimating to his hearers, who were well acquainted with their own national ritual, that both the paschal lamb, and those that were sacrificed at the morning and evening service, were only typical of this the real victim, which had been *slain* (in the Divine decree) *from the foundation of the world*^e. It was to that daily offering which was bought with the half shekel, which all Jews paid as the price of their redemption^f, that St. Peter alludes, when he says, *Ye were not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb*

^e Rev. xiii. 8.

^f Exod. xxx. 12.

without blemish and without spot^a. St. Paul calls upon believers to *keep the feast*^b, because *Christ our Passover is slain for us*. In the Revelationⁱ, he is represented in the midst of his Father's throne under the symbol of a *Lamb as it had been slain*, who had by his blood redeemed many out of all nations unto God; and he himself set his seal to this doctrine, by saying, *The bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world*. The Saviour taketh away the sin of the world, by rendering it consistent with God's justice and holiness to pardon and accept sinners; and repentance and reformation, to which the deist ascribes inherent efficacy, are themselves gifts purchased by his death.

The next day, seeing Jesus walking, John repeated his testimony to two of his disciples, Andrew and another, who is supposed, from the accuracy with which he marks particulars, and his omission of the name, to be the Evangelist. They returned with Jesus to his temporary abode in the neighbourhood on his invitation, and it being four in the afternoon, stayed with him the rest of the day. Andrew, convinced by his conversation that he was the Messiah, brought his brother Simon, who at this first interview was surnamed by Jesus, Cephas, in Greek, *Peter*, in English, *a Stone*; but they were not called to a constant attendance upon him till some time after his return to Galilee. The day after, Jesus himself invited Philip their townsman; and he introduced to him Nathanael, supposed to be the proper name of the person called by the other Evangelists, Bartholomew, that is, the son of Tholomæus. He was prejudiced against Jesus on account of his reputed birth-place, but candidly yielded to his friend's request, to come and judge for himself. To him our Saviour bore this honourable testimony, that he was without guile, and in character as well as by descent an Israelite; and to convince him that

^a 1 Pet. i. 19.^b 1 Cor. v. 7.ⁱ Rev. v. 6.

he was the Messiah, by showing that his knowledge surpassed that of man, he told him that he saw him, when he thought himself unobserved, under a fig-tree, it might be, while conversing with Philip; and this proof that Jesus though absent knew how he was employed, removed his doubts, and he acknowledged him to be the Son of God, and the King of Israel. Our Saviour seems to wonder that such an indication as this of superhuman knowledge should have drawn forth this confession; and he promised him greater aid for the confirmation and increase of his faith. He assured him, that as he had been brought to believe this single revelation of his glory, his knowledge of what had passed at a distance, he should henceforth be favoured with a sight of greater things, and should behold, as typified by the ladder shown to their progenitor Israel in his mysterious dream, an intercourse between heaven and earth, carried on by *angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man*, as the medium of communication. His language is obscure, and literally implies the personal appearance of those ministering spirits; but as none such are recorded as taking place in the presence of any of the Apostles, we must refer it, I conceive, to our Lord's subsequent exhibitions of miraculous power.

19. *Jesus first shows forth his glory, by miraculously changing water into wine, at a wedding feast at Cana. John ii. 1—12.*

Our Lord returned into Galilee with these five disciples; and, on the third day after, was present at a marriage feast. It is supposed, from the part taken by his virgin mother, that it was at the house of a relation, and, as Joseph is not mentioned now or afterwards, that he was already dead. It is said, that Jesus here first *manifested forth his glory*, by changing water into wine; and the expression, which is remarkable, is never used in reference to a prophet or

apostle, that they were only instruments by which God manifested forth his glory; but Jesus, as Emmanuel, wrought his mighty works by his own inherent power. As he taught, so he performed miracles with authority. *I will, be thou clean^k; I charge thee come out of the man^l*: whereas the language of Peter is, *Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? His name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong^m. Jesus Christ maketh thee wholeⁿ*: and under the former dispensation, Moses thus addresses the Israelites, *Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you^o*.

Our Lord's reply to his mother, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* and the occasion on which this miracle was wrought, condemn the superstition and the idolatry of the Church of Rome, which represents celibacy as meritorious, and declares the Virgin to be a proper object of religious worship. Her divines endeavour to refute the charge of idolatry, by a subtle distinction, which has seldom prevailed in practice, between supreme adoration, and that inferior degree of it by which the saints are invoked as intercessors to pray to God for us. The former they call *Latreia*, *Λατρεία*, Worship; the latter *Doulia*, *Δουλία*, Service; both of which Greek words, it is remarkable, are appropriated to the Deity in the Commandment, according to the Septuagint, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*. They, however, avow that higher honour is to be paid to the Virgin than to any other created being, and to express it have invented the term *Hyperdoulia*, *ὑπερδουλία*, or Supreme Service. The respect naturally felt for this obedient handmaid soon degenerated into a blameable excess. The office of her Son was gradually transferred to her, and she was invoked, among other blasphemous titles, as the Refuge of sinners, and as the Queen of Saints, and even of Angels;

^k Matt. viii. 3.

^l Mark ix. 2.

^m Acts iii.

ⁿ Acts ix. 34.

^o Exodus xiv. 13.

and this not only by ordinary individuals, for whose prayers it would not be fair to make the church responsible, but even by those whom she has canonized. Thus throughout the Psalms, Saint Bonaventura has substituted Lady for Lord, transferring to her the petitions addressed to Jehovah; and a Litany has been composed in her honour, in which she is addressed as the equal of her Son. There are also hymns in the offices sanctioned by the church, which ascribe to her maternal authority over him; and in the canon of the Mass, there is a prayer *to* her by name, with the Saints, Martyrs, and Apostles; though their earlier Liturgies prove that prayer was therein offered up *for* them and her. Unhappily there are at this day multitudes who call upon her to beseech, nay even to command, her Son, now that he sits upon his Throne, and has all power in heaven and in earth committed to him, though in his state of humiliation he would not suffer her to counsel him in the exercise of his ministry. Witness these passages from Roman Catholic hymns: "Jussu matris impera Salvatori:" and, "Monstra te esse matrem:" the latter of which I have myself seen inscribed over an altar in the cathedral of Narbonne. These commands are softened down to intercession in the English translations, prepared for the Roman Catholics of our own country. But so far are their divines of our days from softening down such expressions, that Cardinal Wiseman, in his Lectures lately preached and published in this country, boldly brings forward from the Fathers some, which he says are stronger than Roman Catholics would use now. We may add, that they are unhappily returning to their example in many instances, by placing themselves under her immediate direction, without any mention either of the Father or the Son. He selects some from Athanasius, upon which he observes, Mark well these words, "Grant us great gifts from the treasures of thy graces," as if he hoped to receive

them from her direct: and others from Ephrem Syrus, who not only seeks salvation through her intercession, but begs from herself deliverance from sin. We allow that they and other Fathers too often address the Virgin in terms which reason and religion alike disclaim; but happily these authors are regarded by Protestants as no more than witnesses to the opinions and practices of their own age. As such they are most valuable; but the more we study their writings, though we may sometimes derive from them instruction and edification, the more reason we shall find to rejoice that we have been taught to call no fallible man our teacher, and that our Church refers us to the Scripture as the sole rule of faith. To Cardinal Wiseman, who regards the Fathers as authorities, I will recommend a due consideration of a passage which he himself quotes from the Reply of Epiphanius to the Collyridians, who were in the habit of offering cakes, as an unbloody sacrifice, to the Virgin. "Holy indeed is Mary's person, but not Divine, not given to us as an object of worship; but she herself worshipped him who was born of her flesh, and descended from heaven from the Father's bosom. Why did our Lord call her Woman, but that no one might think her of a more excellent nature, prophetically referring to those schisms and heresies which he knew would come? That ancient error shall not rule over us, to desert the living God, and worship his creatures; for if he does not suffer us to worship angels, much less will he the daughter of Anna^p." It is most deserving notice, that their divines abroad, unlike those in Protestant countries, who keep as much out of sight as they can these gross corruptions of the faith, even allow, that in Italy her worship is greatly on the increase, and that the religion of Christ is rapidly yielding to the religion of Mary; for not only was the fact confessed with complacency by a Jesuit to

^p Hist. iii. 59.

an English Clergyman^a, but it may be proved by evidence which cannot be confuted. In Alphonso di Ligori's "Glories of Mary," there is a vision of two ladders, which reach from earth to heaven, at the top of one of which stands the Saviour, at that of the other his mother, and all who attempt to enter by the former fail, while those who try the other with her assistance succeed; and this is not the private opinion of an ordinary divine, but of one who has been lately canonised. I may add, that the late Pope, in the hope of removing the cholera, followed in procession bare foot a picture of the Virgin, which was venerated as working miracles, and had crowned it with his own hands; and his successor in his addresses acknowledges her for his sole protector, and has at last sanctioned as doctrine, what had been hitherto, in deference to the Dominicans, treated as a pious opinion, her immaculate conception. Nor is it long since in a new prayer, Joseph and Mary have been put upon the level of her incarnate Son, by the invention as it were of an earthly Trinity :

"Jesus, Joseph, Mary, I give you my heart and soul."

"Jesus, Joseph, Mary, Assist me in my last agony."

"Jesus, Joseph, Mary, I breathe my soul to you in peace."

Our Saviour's reply is evidently intended as a discouragement to his mother's interposing, and conveys a reproof, but in the gentlest manner; for there is no coarseness or disrespect in his use of the word Woman. Ladies of the highest rank are thus addressed, not only in Homer's poems, and in the Greek drama, but also in that refined age, as appears from its application by Augustus to his wife Livia, in a discourse preserved or composed by Dion Cassius; and our Lord himself again used it, when dying he consigned the Virgin to the care of his beloved disciple. The reply is ambiguous; for, *My hour is not yet come*, may mean, either that he reserved for the passover at Jerusalem the public

^a Seymer's Mornings among the Jesuits, chap. iii.

performing of miracles as the Messiah; and that this, which was not made known even to many who were benefited by it, was only meant as an act of kindness, and for the confirmation of the faith of his immediate followers; or, that he would grant her request at the proper moment, that is, when all the wine was exhausted. So his mother understood it, and I should presume, with Chrysostom, rightly; for she had not as yet, he writes, "the opinion which she ought to have had, but because she bare him, counted that, after the manner of other mothers, she might in all things command him whom it was more fitting for her to reverence as her Lord." One would suppose that such a rebuke as this would extinguish all pretexts for the Marian worship on the part of Roman Catholics. But they present in connection with it a very awful specimen of tampering with God's word. The very same words used by our Lord to his mother are addressed to him by a demoniac^r. In the latter passage, the Church of Rome translates them as we do, but in the former, in a way that destroys the rebuke, by destroying the meaning.

Infidels object, that this miracle has a tendency to encourage, at least to tolerate, intemperance; and we must allow, that the quantity of water turned into wine was considerable, being upon the lowest computation above twenty gallons in each of the six vessels. But we should consider, that in that country wedding feasts lasted generally seven days; that the guests, who were probably many, might, in consequence of the invitation of Jesus, who was already sufficiently known to have disciples, be more than had been expected; and that it was not unsuitable to his amiable and friendly character, to provide the new-married persons with some for future consumption. We too in this northern climate are apt to forget, that wine, which is with us a luxury, was in Palestine, as in France or Italy,

^r Mark v. 7.

the ordinary drink, and was much weaker than that which is brought to our tables. The miracle, it must be allowed, stands alone, as forming a class by itself; all the rest resolve into the removal of positive evil; this into an useful, yet not essential, gratification, and yet, unlike false ones, within reasonable limits. This beginning of his miracles contrasts the spirit of the two Dispensations; the Hebrew Legislator, who was commissioned to work upon the fears of a tyrant, commenced his mission by converting water into blood: Jesus, whose object was to persuade and to renew the heart, changed it into wine; a change well adapted to show the kindness of his disposition, and to win the affections, and it produced the desired and natural effect upon his disciples. Those disciples had been followers of the Baptist, and one object of the miracle might be to show them that his doctrine was less rigid and austere. His social disposition, which conveys to us the important lesson, that virtue does not consist in withdrawing from the world, but in overcoming its temptations, exposed him among his captious adversaries to the charge of excess in eating and drinking; but we may be assured, that he who warned his associates, *Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness*^s, would countenance no degree of intemperance by his presence, or work a miracle to provide more wine for those who had already drunk too much. Excess cannot be fairly inferred from the observation of the Manager of the entertainment, who speaks of feasts in general, not of this particular one. Preachers, however, in contrasting the Saviour's permitting the innocent pleasures of life, with the ascetical austerity of some Christian teachers, have sometimes expressed themselves unguardedly, and have led their hearers, whose passions have seconded their arguments, into too great a conformity with the world.

^s Luke xxi. 34.

Reasonable indulgence may imperceptibly pass into excess. Let us remember the treachery of our own hearts, and the danger of approaching the very limit of propriety. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God*, is the exhortation of the Apostle^t; and the recollection that the articles that compose our entertainments are provided by his bounty, and the Christian practice of asking his blessing on our meals, have a tendency to sanctify their use, and to check intemperance. None has been so much abused as the subject of this miracle; and the false Prophet, knowing that abstinence is easier than temperance, altogether prohibited a beverage, which may by stupifying for a season degrade man below the brutes that perish, or by its maddening quality prove itself, as it is called by the Mahometan poets, “the mother of sins.” Our true Prophet, by this miracle, not only teaches us, that wine, *which maketh glad the heart of man*, may be innocently drunk, though it is to too many the occasion of guilt; but by making it a symbol of the spiritual refreshment which believers in him derive from his blood, has consecrated it, and therefore afforded an additional atoning motive not to abuse a gift which he hath eminently thus honoured.

As this conversion of water into wine was the earliest of the many mighty works by which Jesus proved that he came forth from God, I avail myself of it to introduce some general observations upon

MIRACLES.

A wonder is natural; our ignorance only makes it wonderful; but a miracle is supernatural, an effect beyond, and sometimes contrary to, the established order of things. God's Creation is full of the former, his Word alone acquaints us with the latter. For example, persons apparently dead are sometimes restored from their state of

^t 1 Cor. x.

suspended animation; and these resuscitations, however extraordinary, being known to be effected by human skill, are regarded only as *wonders*; but no one who had seen a man, that had been four days dead, come alive out of the grave at the command of another, could doubt of his having witnessed a *miracle*. Such events, however, have not occurred within our own experience, or that of our acquaintance; we only read of them, and the proper effect of a miracle is limited to spectators. To others at a distance, whether of time or space, it resolves itself into a question of testimony. Now testimony is fallible; some men, we know, wish to deceive us, others are themselves deceived; ancient historians record miracles which our judgment satisfies us are incredible; and pretensions to them have been made in the Roman Church, and of late, among a few enthusiastic Protestants, which will not bear investigation. Infidels therefore may plausibly urge suspicions against those recorded in the Bible; and this has been the grand attempt of those of modern times, who have seen that miracles afford one of the strongest external arguments for Christianity, since one really wrought in its behalf, would be considered as an incontrovertible proof that it came from God. I say, infidels of modern times; for those who were present at our Lord's miracles could not resist the evidence of their senses; yet loving darkness rather than light, they ascribed them, though works of mercy, to a confederacy with the evil Spirit. He argued against the absurdity of this opposition, subversive of the Devil's power; and it is remarkable that his argument is drawn not from the degree of power shown, but from the moral tendency of his work, probably because the former would have made no impression; and in the Pentateuch the Israelites are warned in like manner to judge of miracles by the doctrine they support, not of the doctrine by miracles. Still, on other occasions, he declares, and less prejudiced spectators agreed, that his works could only be

accomplished by a Divine power; and we may affirm unanswerably, that though invisible spiritual beings inferior to the Supreme may be capable of performing acts beyond our power, the goodness of the Deity is a security to us, that he would never suffer one of them to work a miracle that should lead the well-disposed into an erroneous belief. This power was disclaimed by Mahomet, who has alone presumed to oppose Christianity by the assertion of a new Revelation; and the only known attempt, that of the Egyptian magicians, if they were really the agents of the evil Spirit, was signally unsuccessful, and the *signs and lying wonders* of Antichrist will deceive only those *who have received not the love of the truth*.

As in other instances, so in this, the attacks of the enemy have been overruled to good, since they have drawn forth replies and vindications, the effect of which has been to confirm the reader in the belief of Scriptural miracles, and consequently to strengthen his faith. Thus Leslie, in his "Short and Easy Method with the Deist," and Bishop Douglas, in his "Criterion," lay down rules, by which they reject Pagan and Popish miracles, and establish the reality of those of the Bible. We may observe with Bishop Conybeare, that the more numerous the deceits of this kind are which are brought to light, the greater advantage arises to the Christian cause; for if the Church of Rome, which had all the advantages imaginable on her side towards propagating an imposture, hath yet been unable to deceive us in this respect, how much more incapable must Christ and his Apostles have been, of carrying on such a cheat without discovery. It hath been objected, if miracles were formerly required, why are they not now granted? We reply, that if there be no just ground to question the truth of those alleged to have been performed to authenticate a religion when first announced, why should men insist on any new ones, since these, confirmed by sufficient testimony, lose none of their

credibility by time, nay, are strengthened by the belief of ages. And if they should become common, it is hard to determine how they should be distinguished from mere natural effects; for we judge of what is natural or supernatural, by observation and experience.

A miracle is defined by Bishop Conybeare to be a sensible effect, either in itself or its circumstances supernatural, that is, above the natural powers of any visible agent, or evidently not produced by it, and contrary to the general laws of God's acting upon matter. This definition will comprehend two classes of miracles, of both of which the Evangelists supply many examples. The first, the Absolute, are such as no natural causes will produce, as this conversion of water into wine; Christ's walking upon the sea; the satisfying thousands with a few loaves, the remaining fragments of which far exceeded the original quantity; the casting out demons, and the raising the dead. The second, the Providential, are only miraculous in their circumstances, being coincidences divinely brought about between facts, and the words of him who works them, at the very instant they are required. An immense haul of fishes, or a piece of money found in the mouth of one of them, are not absolute miracles, but a natural event is raised into a miracle by its prediction, and the ends it is made to serve^b. Thus gradually to heal the sick with medicine is sometimes granted to the physician in the ordinary course of God's Providence; but to heal instantly, with a word, and sometimes even at a distance, through such means as are evidently inadequate to the effect, or without the use of any, is no less miraculous than the first class, though it does not, like that, interfere with the laws of nature. A miracle is contrary to them;

^b Trench's Notes on the Miracles, p. 13, and 130. from which learned and instructive work I have inserted many striking remarks, both in this general view, and in the reflections upon most of the miracles separately considered.

not that there is any inherent power in nature, as our language seems to imply; for these laws, as they are called, are only what God has been pleased to impress upon his works, and he can suspend them at pleasure. With him any change is possible, and to the Almighty whatever is possible, is equally easy. To prove then a miracle possible, we have only to show that the moral perfection of the Deity does not forbid its performance; and every reasonable person will grant, that the confirmation of a divine Revelation is the fittest occasion that can be conceived for such a display of power. If a knowledge of God's will be desirable for the guidance of our conduct here, and for our happiness hereafter, we may justly expect the communication of it from our heavenly Father; but how shall a Teacher sent from him convince us that he speaks with authority, unless he produces the credentials of his mission? and to what credentials can he appeal except miracles? "In fact, they are included in the very idea of a revelation; for a revelation cannot be made but by an interposition of Deity; so that the probability of a revelation implies a correspondent probability of the occurrence of miracles. Nay, we may even venture to affirm, that there is a necessary correlation between the two; for as on the one hand miracles (or prophecies, which are in fact miraculous, being contrary to the course of nature) are necessary to prove the divine authority of an agent; so, on the other hand, the performance of miracles, or the delivery of true predictions, immediately suggest the conviction that they have been permitted, for the purpose of proving, that the person by whom they are performed, is employed by God to do something, or reveal something, which mankind would not have known in any other way *." The Greek word, *σημείον*, sign, is therefore a more appro-

* Olinthus Gregory's excellent Letters on the Evidences, Doctrines, and Duties of the Christian Religion, vii.

priate one than miracle or wonder. *What sign showest thou, seeing thou doest these things?*^γ was the demand made by the Jews to Jesus, when he assumed the Messiah's office of purifying the temple. We know Nicodemus's conclusion, *Thou art a Teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him*^z. Our Lord himself uses the same argument on several occasions; *The works that I do, they bear witness of me*^α. And the epistle to the Hebrews tells us respecting the Apostles, *that God bare them witness, with signs, and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost*^β; including under these various terms every act of a supernatural character.

The miracles which we justly discredit, as those of Apollonius of Tyana among the heathen, and those of the Jesuit Apostle of the Indies, St. Francis Xavier, and of the founder of the order himself, are mentioned for the first time by biographers unacquainted with them, who wrote at a considerable interval after their deaths. These of the two latter are even disclaimed by the first writers of their lives, while they are too numerous, and many of them too silly, to be believed; whereas those of Jesus, which are all worthy of him and well-timed, were from the first maintained by his adherents, and allowed by his opponents. We have a remarkable instance in the case of the man born blind, of the vain endeavour of the latter to discover some collusion; and the last that our Lord wrought, the restoration to life of Lazarus, which they could not deny, determined them to procure his death. But what neither the contemporaries of Jesus, nor subsequent opponents of Christianity, as Celsus and the Emperor Julian, ventured to attempt, has been undertaken by modern infidels; they have studiously brought forward the miracles ascribed to Roman Catholic saints by their biographers, and those which are reported by Tacitus

^γ John ii. 18.

^z John iii. 2.

^α John v. 36. ^β x. 25.

^β Heb. ii. 4.

of the Emperor Vespasian, and argue, that no better evidence can be assigned for those in the Scriptures. Their objections have been ably refuted by Douglas in his *Criterion*, and by Leslie in his celebrated tract, to which I refer, only extracting from them their marks of true and false miracles. The latter, says the Bishop, labour under one or other of the following defects, which we think warrant our disbelieving them: the accounts of them were not published till long after the time when they were said to be performed; and the report of them was propagated only at a distance from the supposed scene of action: and allowing them to have the two foregoing qualifications, we may still suspect them to be false, if in the time when and the place where they took their rise, they might be suffered to pass without examination. Leslie has proposed as criteria of real miracles, 1. that the fact be such as men's outward senses can judge of; 2. that it be notorious, performed publicly in the presence of witnesses; 3. that there be memorials of it kept up in commemoration of it; and, 4. that such memorials commence with the fact. There are some, in favour of which the two latter marks cannot be affirmed; but whatever has all the four, cannot be false. These criteria he applies with equal force to the history of Moses and of Christ. The miracles of both were wrought publicly in the face of the world; and we learn from the Acts^c, that after our Lord's ascension, three thousand at one time, and more than two thousand at another, were converted in consequence of what they themselves had seen, and respecting which it would have been impossible to impose on them. Here then *in their nature and their publicity* we find the first two criteria, and *in the Sacraments* we have the others; for they were instituted as perpetual memorials by our Lord himself, at the very time when the circumstances to which they relate took place, and they have been observed without inter-

^c Acts ii. and iv.

ruption ever since through the whole Christian world. Moreover, he commissioned his Apostles to proclaim the Gospel, and they imparted the same commission to others, who conveyed it from generation to generation down to the present day; so that the Christian Ministry is as notorious a fact, as the existence of the tribe of Levi among the Jews. The Gospel is also as much a rule of conduct to Christians, as the books of Moses to the Jews; and it being recorded in that Gospel, that pastors and teachers were appointed by Christ to continue until the end of the world, it follows, that if the Gospel history were invented in any subsequent age, at the time of the invention there could be no such order of men, a fact which must give the lie to the Gospel. The miracles of Christ and his Apostles being affirmed to be true, no otherwise than as there were at that identical time (whenever the Deist will suppose the Gospel history to be forged) not only Sacraments, but an order of Clergy to administer them; and it being impossible that there could be any such things before they were invented, it is as impossible they should be received and accredited when invented. Hence it follows, that it was as much an impossibility to have imposed these miraculous relations upon mankind in after ages, as it would have been to make persons believe they saw the miracles at the time they are said to have been wrought, if they had not taken place.

True miracles are distinguished from false by the economy both of their nature and their number. As they were never wrought except when required, the miracle required, and no greater one, was wrought. They are not assigned to favourite characters, as Abraham or David, but usher in the Mosaic Dispensation, and the efforts of Elijah and Elisha to restore it, when almost superseded by idolatry in the kingdom of Israel. They were also wrought by our Lord and his Apostles to establish Christianity; but we may infer from their rarity, that it is only in cases of primary importance that the Deity

suspends the ordinary laws of nature. Such reported wonders as show a mere idle display of power, may therefore be at once rejected as incredible. Thus to contrast, as is done in the Clementine Homilies, our Saviour's cures of the dumb and blind with Simon Magus's barking dogs of stone, his flights through the air, and his transformations into a goat or serpent, is sufficient to mark the first as true, the second as false. The inutility of heathen miracles (and the same may be said of those of the apocryphal gospels, and of ecclesiastical history) has been strongly urged by Origen. The miracles of Moses ended in the Jewish Polity, those of Christ in the formation of the Church; but what, he asks Celsus, have your boasted Esculapius and Apollonius to show as the fruit of theirs? If absurd miracles are to be rejected, much more those that are malicious, such as some ascribed in the spurious gospels to the benevolent Author of our religion. Supernatural power, however used, seems to have been the idol of these writers, whose own moral state must have been deplorable, when they could so ill appreciate the character of him, who only went about doing good, and came to save men's lives, not to destroy them. In Christian countries there can be no adequate reason for any, since the Bible carries with it sufficient evidence to any sceptical person who will fairly read it; and the tendency of those ascribed to the saints is prejudicial, and contrary to the genius of Christianity, since they exalt the supposed receivers of the gift, not the Giver, and unduly raise them in the estimation of those who believe the legend, which moreover is seldom represented as worthy of Divine interference. *As signs to unbelievers*, and they alone require them, the power of working miracles was granted to the Apostles *to cooperate with them*; but when no longer wanted, it ceased. A modern Missionary might perhaps expect its revival, were not the expectation checked by the recollection, that the gift had not been bestowed on his predecessors since

the Apostolical age. The important conversion of our own country and of Germany, falls within an historical period, but neither Augustine nor Boniface, some of whose letters are printed, profess to have worked miracles; and Xavier since the Reformation confesses, that he had no such assistance in his labours in India. The superior intelligence, learning, and knowledge of our Missionaries, especially in medicine and the arts of life, in a degree compensate for the denial of those extraordinary gifts; and the moral miracle of cruel or licentious idolaters, who on embracing Christianity have renounced their evil habits, proves, that the ordinary influence of the Holy Spirit is sufficient to turn the heart to God, and to bring them to the practice as well as to the acknowledgment of their duty. Christianity at its promulgation had more formidable obstacles to overcome, not only the idolatry and philosophy of the heathen, but a real Revelation to Israel, the believers in which could not understand that it was to be superseded by it. All the power, prejudice, learning, and knowledge of the world were then leagued against it. Time has shown its intrinsic excellence and its success; and a Missionary can now appeal to his own ancestors converted without miracles. Even in the age in which they were given, their chief use was to arrest attention, and to procure a respectful hearing for the Preacher; and it was by St. Paul's discourses, not by his works, that Lydia and Damaris and Dionysius became believers.

The failure of earlier infidels probably led Hume, in his celebrated Essay, instead of making specific objections, to maintain that no miracle, however attested, can be rendered credible even in the lowest degree. "A miracle," he says, "is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as complete as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined; and if so, it is an undeniable consequence, that it

cannot be surmounted by any proof whatever, derived from human testimony." Dr. Campbell, in his Dissertation, has examined the principles advanced in that sceptical work, and shows, that the whole is built upon a false hypothesis. He observes, that the evidence arising from human testimony is not, as Hume represents it, solely derived from experience; but that, on the contrary, testimony has a natural influence on belief, antecedent to experience. Besides, the uniformity of experience in favour of any fact, is not a proof against its being reversed in a particular instance. The evidence arising from the single testimony of a man of known veracity, will go far to establish a belief of its being actually reversed; and if his testimony be confirmed by a few others of the same character, we cannot withhold our assent to it. Now though the operations of nature are governed by uniform laws, and though we have not the testimony of our senses in favour of any violation of them, still, if in particular instances we have the testimony of thousands of our fellow creatures, and these too men of strict integrity, swayed by no motives of ambition or interest, and governed by the principles of common sense, that they were actually witnesses of these violations, the constitution of our nature obliges us to believe them. And, in the case of Christian miracles, we may add, that these witnesses were themselves convinced by them, contrary to their original prepossessions; and that many of them proved their honesty, by submitting, in consequence, to contempt, privations, and persecution, and some even to death. The determination to propagate the belief of false miracles, (independent of the additional difficulty arising from the silent concurrence of Jews and Gentiles in the delusion which this hypothesis requires,) in support of such a religion as that taught in the New Testament, is as great a miracle as human imagination can conceive. "The proof arising from experience amounts to no more than this, that we learn from it what is conformable to the ordinary course of things; but we cannot learn

from it, that it is impossible that things should happen in any particular instance, contrary to that course. And if it be possible, there is place for testimony. When also Hume talks of uniform experience, he supposes the very thing in question, because, by his own acknowledgment, mankind in all ages have believed that miracles have been wrought^d."

The miracles of the new dispensation are in three respects contrasted with those of the old. 1. Elijah must pray long, and his servant go up seven times, before tokens of the rain appear^e; and he stretches himself thrice on a child, and cries unto the Lord, and painfully recovers its life^f. Elisha, with yet more of effort, and only after partial failure^g, restores that of the Shunamite: while the miracles of Christ are accomplished with perfect ease; he has only to speak, and it is done. 2. Where the miracles are similar in kind, his are on a grander scale; Elisha^h feeds an hundred men with twenty loaves, he, five thousand with five. 3. Above all, they are distinguished by their moral character. Many of those of the elder dispensation, as the plagues of Egypt, were acts of severity; Elijah brought down fire from heaven to consume his enemies, and Elisha caused bears to devour the young men that mocked him; but, as Bacon beautifully observes, the Spirit of Jesus was the Spirit of the dove, and all his miracles were works of beneficence, none of judgment. They are distinguished also from all others in having been foretold; and he refers the Baptist's disciples to them, as the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy; two of which, the restoring sight to the blind, and the recovery of the lame, had never been wrought before. They far exceed in number those both of the Prophets and of his Apostles. Near forty are specified; but we learn from St. John, that Jesus performed many not mentioned in his Gospel; and a careful

^d Leland's Deistical Writers, vol. ii. p. 64.

^e 1 Kings xviii. 42—44.

^f 1 Kings xvii. 21.

^g 2 Kings iv. 33—35.

^h 2 Kings iv. 42.

reader of the first three will perceive, that those they contain are only recorded as a specimen. Thus St. Matthew tells us, (iv. 24.) that *the fame of Jesus went out into all Syria; and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed of devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and he healed them.* And again, (xv. 30.) *great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them.* Similar passages occur in the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke; and St. John (ii. 23.) adds, immediately after his purifying the temple, *many believed, seeing his miracles;* though the only one he had yet related, was that performed at Cana, at a distance from Jerusalem. Again, Chorazin is mentioned by himself as the scene of works, which would have converted Tyre and Sidon; yet none of the Evangelists even speak of his visiting that town. They were often wrought in public, and in the presence of enemies, and wherever he went. The whole country therefore was full of those who could bear testimony that he had come from God, from the signs which he had shown; so that we perceive that they must have been far more numerous than we are apt to imagine. It is natural to ask, why, among the multitude out of which they had to select, the different Evangelists have generally given us the same? and the answer is, they probably recorded those that were most memorable, on account of their greater celebrity, or from their more important results. Variety is another characteristic of his miracles. Not merely one disease, but all, yield to his power; and not diseases only, but bodily defects: *he made the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see*ⁱ; and there are commentators of note who think, that he not only restored the use of limbs,

ⁱ Matt. xv. 31.

but even the limbs themselves^k; yet I can hardly believe that this opinion is tenable. Surely, if this had really been the meaning, it would have been brought out more distinctly, and no miracle appears to have been a creation, for there was matter to work upon in the one that comes nearest to it, the multiplication of the loaves. In three instances he recalled to life the dead: and finally, he set the seal to his Mission, by raising his own body from the grave. Inanimate objects, the wind and the waves, obeyed him, they even changed their nature, water becoming wine, and a few loaves growing into many. Evil spirits also submitted to his command, and left those they had possessed at his bidding. Some persons he cured on their own petition, others on that of their friends. No distinction was made between rich and poor; the only exception is, that his miracles were never worked to gratify unbelievers, or to relieve himself.

In subservience to their grand design^l, the confirmation of his Mission, they had, as observed, a secondary object, the alleviation of misery; and we may safely affirm, that thousands were restored by him to health and the use of their limbs. If the condemnation of the fig-tree, and the destruction of the herd of swine, be urged as exceptions; I answer, that the condemnation of a barren plant that belonged to no one was neither an interference with private property, nor an injury to the community, and conveyed to his own age, and, as recorded, to all subsequent ones, a warning which, properly improved, will save many souls from destruction. The other he did not command, but permit, and it is no greater impeachment of his goodness, than the existence of moral evil is of the justice of Divine Providence. We should also set the recovery of the demoniacs against the loss of the swineherds, who ought pro-

^k This is the sense given by Elsner and Wetstein to *καλλοὶ*, which our translators render *maimed*, and is distinguished from *χωλοὶ*, the *lame*, with which it is joined. Matt. xv. 31.

^l Is. xxx. 5.

bably not to have kept them within the Holy Land; and it produced, though not immediately, a beneficial effect upon the inhabitants of the district in which it was wrought, far outweighing the injury it had occasioned. It proves also beyond the power of confutation, the reality of demoniacal possession, and as such it still answers its end, as the fact is denied not by infidels only, but even by some Christian writers.

To three^m it is objected, that Christ made use of an external application; but an application which had no efficacy, but what he was pleased to give it, cannot annihilate their supernatural character. The reason of this departure from his ordinary mode seems to have been, his requiring faith in those who solicited his interference. Thus we are told, that *he did not many mighty works at Nazareth, because of their unbelief*; and often before he healed persons he made an enquiry as to their faith in his power. In these cases he used the application best calculated to make an impression on the senses the men possessed unimpaired, and such as would lead them to observe, that he was about to interpose in order to perfect their defective organs. A deaf man can judge of the intentions of another only by seeing what he does. Such an one, therefore, our Lord took aside to fix his attention on himself; he put his fingers into his ears, and touched his tongue, to signify his intention of affecting them; and then looked up to heaven, at the same time speaking, to show that this change would proceed from a Divine power exercised at his interposition. The same purpose was answered by the anointing with clay the eyes of the man born blind. It assured him, that the Person who anointed them was the sole Author of the cure; and had the ground of his assurance been less full and circumstantial, he could never have silenced as unanswerably

^m John ix. 1—7. Mark vii. 33. viii. 23. Graves's Essay on the Character of the Apostles and Evangelists.

as he did the captious objections of the Pharisees. We may be confirmed in believing this to have been the design of these external applications, by observing, that they were used in no instance except those of blindness and deafness; and that it does not appear that these three men had any previous knowledge of our Saviour. It was therefore necessary to draw their attention to himself. But as the blind men at Capernaumⁿ, and those near Jericho^o, sought to be healed, with a declared belief in his power, he used no such means, but only required that this profession should be sincere. *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* They said unto him, *Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened^p.*

In conclusion, I observe, that he possessed at all times this miraculous power, and acted by his own authority, while his disciples could only work miracles when permitted, and they referred them to their Master, as the real Author. From this we justly infer, that Jesus was not only, like Moses and Elijah, sent from God, but that he was God.

PART III.

20. *Jesus commences his Ministry, by driving traders out of the Temple. John ii. 13.*

FROM Cana, Jesus, with his five disciples, his mother, and brethren, went down to Capernaum, which seems, whenever he was stationary, to have been his home; but his present stay did not exceed a few days, from his desire of commencing his Ministry in the holy city in which it had pleased God for many centuries to set his name, and during the

ⁿ Matt. ix.

^o Matt. xx.

^p Matt. ix.

Feast which preeminently shadowed forth his expiatory sacrifice, when it would be filled with worshippers not only from Judæa, but from all the countries into which the Jews had been dispersed. This was probably the 28th year of the Vulgar æra, and 780th of Rome, literally *the acceptable year of the Lord*, being the thirty-third Jubilee, reckoning from the first sabbatical year after the second division of the conquered lands by Joshua. Jesus had changed water into wine at the marriage feast, to confirm the faith of his disciples, and perhaps of his mother, but his hour of publicly displaying his miraculous power was not then come. Even the governor of the feast knew not whence this wine of superior quality came, but as the servants did, the fact must have transpired. Still the report of it might not have reached Jerusalem; and it was there and at the Passover that he granted his people this sign of his being the Messiah. The miracles he wrought there were probably numerous, but none are specified. We are told, however, that they produced their intended effect, and that *many*, in consequence, *believed in his name*; still most of them entertained carnal and worldly hopes, and had no conception of the spiritual nature of his sovereignty; for it is added, *he did not commit himself unto them*. The cause assigned, *he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man*, is equivalent to a declaration of his divinity, for reason as well as revelation teaches, that, as David said to Solomon, *Jehovah searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts*^a. And this prerogative, peculiar to God, is claimed by Jesus, who described himself to this Evangelist at Patmos as *he who searcheth the hearts and the reins*^b; and he appears to be the Lord possessing this attribute, to whom the Apostles submitted the selection of Judas's successor^c. He now took possession of his house, the Temple, and commenced his Ministry by purifying it from the traders, who

^a 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.^b Rev. ii. 23.^c Acts i. 24.

sold the animals required for sacrifice, and those who, for the convenience of worshippers, exchanged money within its precincts. He nearly closed it with the same act^d, which must not be confounded with this, recorded by John alone. On that occasion, when, being about to be offered up, reserve was no longer expedient, he referred to Isaiah's prophecy, *It is written, My house shall be called an house of prayer for all nations*^e. He now called it, *his Father's house*, but in a sense higher than could be properly used by those who were only God's children by adoption, and suitable to no one but the Messiah; and that they so understood him, is plain from their demanding by what right he thus acted. Jesus did not spring from Levi, but *was of another tribe*, Judah, of which *no man gave attendance at the altar*^f. It must therefore have been as the Proprietor of the Temple, as the God of Israel, to whose service it was dedicated, that he drove from it those who had polluted it. The Jews then first required of him a sign from heaven to justify this assumption of authority, as they did repeatedly afterwards during his Ministry; but he referred them enigmatically to a sign from earth, his crucifixion, and his resurrection on the third day, which he obscurely shadowed forth by declaring, that if they destroyed this Temple, he would raise it again. This they misunderstood of the Temple *made with hands*, but he spake, we know, of his own body, in which *dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*^g, that is, not typically, but really, and was therefore better entitled to the appellation than the material fabric, before which they stood. His speech appeared to them both blasphemous and absurd. Nothing, not even the sign from heaven, could better establish his right than the fact of his resurrection. As that event, however, was yet future, and expected by none of his audience, he could not have been understood at the

^d Matt. xxi. 12.^e Isaiah lvi. 7.^f Heb. vii. 13.^g Col. ii. 9.

time ; but to those *who had ears to hear*, he supplied in this declaration a theme for meditation. Still the obscurity of his reply does not render them excusable, for he proceeded to perform such works as no other man had wrought, which abundantly demonstrated his divine mission. He was no better understood by his disciples than by his enemies, till his meaning was explained by the event ; and they then applied to him the words in which David, as his type, says, *The zeal of thy house has eaten me up*^h ; implying thereby the ardent desire which now impelled him to purify the Temple from the abuses that disgraced it. Yet this zeal, however ardent, was tempered with discretion ; the sheep and bulls he drove before him, but he only ordered the dove-sellers to remove their cages, as he did not wish to injure them by the loss of their property. His enemies treasured up the saying, and brought it as an accusation against him on his trial ; but their malice was defeated, as they contradicted one another ; one saying, *I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three days*ⁱ ; the other, *I will destroy this Temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands*. *Make not*, he now said, *my Father's house a house of merchandize*. The second time his reproof was stronger, *Ye have made it a den of robbers* ; and this seems to intimate, that they were not only covetous, but dishonest. It was the court of the Gentiles that was so desecrated, and it would be difficult for the proselytes, who were not allowed to come nearer to the Altar, to make that a house of prayer, amid the talking of the traders, and the noise of the cattle. By this act the Lord of the Temple restored the whole sacred inclosure to its original use, and marked, as on other occasions, that the time was at hand, when God should be worshipped *in spirit and in truth*. These mercenary traders must have been numerous, especially at the passover, when a multitude of worshippers were

^h Ps. lxi. 9.ⁱ Matt. xxvi. 61.

assembled, who were to be provided with lambs for the paschal supper, and sheep and bulls for the following day. Nevertheless, a man in humble life, hitherto little known, of no influence, without attendants, or arms, except a scourge made at the moment out of the ropes with which the cattle were confined, drove them all before him. Pride, covetousness, and resentment, would incline them to resist, but conscience made them timid, and his manner overawed them.

21. *Nicodemus converses with Jesus by night. John iii. 1—21.*

Nicodemus is almost the only Israelite of distinction and learning who, during our Lord's abode upon earth, became a believer. A ruler, a pharisee, and a teacher, and, we cannot doubt, one of eminence; for Jesus addressed him as a master in Israel; he was not ashamed of enquiring into the doctrines of one who had not been trained in the schools of the Rabbies, and whom they did not acknowledge. Still, superior to the prejudices of his class, he was satisfied that Jesus could not do the works he did, *except God were with him*, and therefore he *came*, but it was secretly and by night. He was timid yet sincere in the search of truth; and his gradual progress in moral courage is most encouraging to all who are tempted by the fear of ridicule or suffering to conceal their conviction, since they may learn from his example, that if they will only set out on the path of duty, God will grant them strength as they advance, till at length they will boldly maintain the truth which at first they dared not confess. The next we hear of Nicodemus is his venturing to speak in favour of Jesus in the Council, though he had scarcely any to support him; and after his crucifixion, when all his followers were dispersed, and even the apostles had fled, he with another councillor came forward openly to honour this reputed malefactor, by bringing a large and costly mixture of spices for his embalment.

The disposition of Nicodemus at this first interview seems to have been right; yet though a teacher in Israel, he was ignorant of the primary truth known to babes in Christ, that the profession of religion is nothing worth without purity of heart, and that this, which no man possesses by nature, must be received as a gift from God. He held the common notion of the Jews which John's baptism was intended to refute, that they would enter of course into the kingdom of the Messiah in their present state, without repentance or reformation. To this opinion, probably not expressed, yet known to him who can read the heart, Jesus replied, by declaring, in the most emphatic language, the necessity of a change of disposition so complete, as to be called a new creation. Nicodemus began the conversation by acknowledging, that the miracles of Jesus had convinced him that he had a divine mission; and our Lord replied, that *except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*. He introduced this declaration, as he was accustomed to do those of special importance, with *Verily, verily, I say unto you*; and certainly there is no knowledge which concerns us so deeply as that of the conditions of salvation. Our Lord, in this short yet pregnant speech, positively asserted the necessity of a change, not only of state, but of character, so entire, as to justify the name of a new Birth; and in conformity with this declaration, the Apostle writes to the Corinthians, *if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature*^k. Nicodemus answered, *How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?* The dulness of his comprehension amazes us, and the reply seems to convey both surprise and reproof, that a person who professed to be a teacher of religion, was ignorant of this elementary truth. From the language of the Prophets, much instruction might have been deduced by a Rabbi, concerning the renewing in-

^k 2 Cor. v. 17.

fluence of the Holy Spirit. Jehovah had inspired Jeremiah to promise that he would write upon the heart of his people the new Covenant which he would make with them; and by Ezekiel^m he had said, *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, and I will put a new spirit within you.* The initiatory rite of circumcision too, and the various lustrations enjoined in the Law, typified and bore witness to the necessity of the purification of the heart. His own reason also might have convinced Nicodemus, that this doctrine was founded on the nature both of God and of man. As a creature, man is under an obligation to obey the law of his Creator, and that law must be, like its Author, perfect. As such, it must approve itself to right reason; yet many of its commands men have at all times regarded as too strict, and even those which they cannot deny to be just and good, they have not the will to perform. A change, therefore, must be wrought either in the Law, or in man; but as the immutability of the Divine perfection precludes the possibility of his lowering his commands in order to suit man's depraved inclinations, these inclinations must be turned to what is right, and man must be *born again of incorruptible seed*, and so far become *partaker of the Divine nature*. That which we derive through our parents from the stock of the fallen Adam, is, like that stock, corrupt; and all, except as renewed in the Spirit, dread the Creator as a hard master, instead of loving him as a benevolent parent. In all the descendants of Adam, therefore, this charge is required, whatever be their circumstances or natural disposition, and no exception is made in favour of those, who, whether by birth, as the seed of Abraham, or by adoption as proselytes, were the children of promise. Jesus thus explained his speech of the necessity of a new birth, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* He goes on to say,

^l Jer. xxxi: 33.

^m Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26.

that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The fallen nature of the first Adam is here contrasted with the perfect manhood of the second; and the declaration is introduced to show, that even a second birth, the case put by Nicodemus, were it possible could be of no avail. This change Jesus illustrated by a comparison drawn from the natural world. *Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* The word which we first render wind, and afterwards spirit, is in the original the same, and this might recommend the comparison, which in the lapse of ages has lost none of its propriety; for notwithstanding our wonderful discoveries in nature, we cannot yet explain why the wind should not blow from one point rather than another, why it should change its direction, and why it should be a tempest, or a gentle breeze, or subside into a perfect calm. It still blows, so to speak, as it listeth. As the wind is invisible, it demonstrates its existence by its effects; and so the conversion of the soul to God eludes the observation of others, and is often unperceived by the subject who is the recipient of grace, but it manifests itself by desires and words and deeds to have been born again, to have been delivered from the dominion of sin, and to have been *translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.* So far Regeneration, though a hard saying to Nicodemus, is perfectly intelligible to a Christian; but our Lord ascribes the new birth to water as well as to the Spirit. And on comparing this solemn asseveration with his charge to the disciples to baptize, accompanied with the promise, *whoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved;* and with St. Paul's declaration^a, that *we are saved by the washing [or laver] of Regeneration;* we are naturally led to

^a Titus iii. 5.

interpret the new birth of Baptism, by which the Catechism teaches, that we who were "by nature the *children of wrath*, are made *children of grace*, members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." Accordingly, Baptismal Regeneration has always been maintained by the Catholic Apostolic Church, as is evinced by the unanimous consent of ancient Liturgies and Commentators, and the doctrine is explicitly asserted in the Services, Homilies, and Articles of our own reformed Branch of it. It is mainly deduced from this passage, which is introduced into our Office for the baptism of adults; and if when our Lord spoke of the necessity of our eating his body, it is generally supposed that he alluded to the Sacrament which he intended to institute in commemoration of his death, we may fairly assume that in this conversation he referred by anticipation to the only other Sacrament which he was pleased to ordain; and the inference is strengthened by the fact, that both discourses have been preserved by the Evangelist, who has not recorded the institution of either.

This tenet has proved a stumbling-block to many pious modern believers; and some even reject it, because, as they imagine, at variance with the genius of Christianity, by substituting the form of godliness for its power; encouraging the professor to rest satisfied with a dead faith, and lulling into a fatal repose the conscience that might be awakened to a sense of guilt, and the necessity of conversion. It has excluded from our communion conscientious Dissenters, and is not received by many attached members of our Church, who think that it is not borne out by its formularies; and since the last edition of this work, the doctrine has been referred to the Privy Council, and the decision of the Court leaves it a question open to private judgment. A discussion of it in a Commentary like this would be out of place, and could not be comprehensive enough to be satisfactory to either party. I would refer

the reader to the treatises of Barrow, Waterland, and the present Bishop of Bangor, as I did before, only avowing my conviction, that our Church maintains that Regeneration, in the proper sense of that word, is effected in Baptism, and briefly assigning the reasons that satisfy my own mind. Its opponents consider water to be a figure, and appeal to the Baptist's declaration, *He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire*; but the last element must be taken metaphorically, the first need not; and as water has always been used in baptism, I conceive that the word should in this discourse be understood in the literal sense. It is highly improbable, to say the least, that our Reformers with all antiquity should have erred in their interpretation of this passage, and that it should have been reserved for Calvin to discover its real meaning. They were inferior to none in spirituality of mind, and had no superstitious confidence in forms and ceremonies, or undue deference to authority, to induce them to retain a tenet that was really subversive of piety and morality. We should indeed doubt their interpretation, if the pernicious consequences charged upon Baptismal Regeneration really flowed from it; but I am persuaded that this is a false assumption arising from misconception, and that the controversy would never have existed if the two parties did not use the same word in different senses. *Regeneration*, which the foreign divines, and our own till a recent period, restricted to Baptism, began to be used for *Renovation*; and those who held that Grace was indefectible, naturally denied that it was always conveyed in that Sacrament; while those could have no objection to this statement who believed that the baptized might lose this precious gift, and recover it. The doctrine has also been over-stated by its opponents, who complain that it condemns all who have not been baptized to perdition. Common sense, however, assures us, that it is not the involuntary omission, but the contempt of God's com-

mands, that will be fatal; and our Church only maintains, that the Sacraments are *generally* necessary to salvation, meaning thereby, *when they may be had*. As to adults, Antiquity considered that Martyrdom supplied its place, nor did it condemn the unbaptized who were prevented from coming to that Sacrament. And with respect to infants, if the punishment of original sin be remitted to them in Baptism, so we may fairly conclude, (though in this charitable and I may add just opinion, we are opposed to Augustine and other Fathers,) that those who are not brought to the font will not suffer for an omission, for which themselves are responsible. Our twenty-seventh Article affirms Baptism to be a sign of Regeneration, or new Birth, whereby they that *receive* it *rightly*, are grafted into the Church; and if we enquire what is a *right* reception, the Catechism will inform us, that the conditions are Faith and Repentance, and these being present, how is it absurd or unreasonable to suppose that Regeneration ensues? Is this more than is warranted by St. Peter's language? *Baptism saves us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God*. The adult heathen, therefore, who offers himself for Baptism in a right frame of mind, becomes, I conceive, a child of God, and entitled to call him Father. It is desirable, that the transition into the kingdom of God should be marked by some overt act, and Baptism, which can be ascertained, seems preferable to a presumed subsequent conversion, which can hardly be made known to others, and may be doubted by the subject of it himself. The unwillingness to adopt this conclusion, I ascribe to the tendency in a Christian country to consider Baptism chiefly with a reference to infants, whereas to understand it as laid down in the New Testament, we ought to view it in relation to persons who are of age to know the obligations

◦ 1 Pet. iii. 21.

it imposes on them, and are willing to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to profess their belief in Christianity. Thus taken, Baptismal Regeneration appears to me a reasonable and edifying doctrine which ought to be predicated of adults; and when I consider that infants were admitted into the Abrahamic covenant by Circumcision, when it was impossible that they should comprehend its demands on them, and that we have reason to think that the children of believing parents were received into the Church from the time of the Apostles without an exception, it appears to me that the practice of baptizing them has been rightly retained by our Reformers. To prevent the abuse of the doctrine, they have taken care to teach, that the conditions of Faith and Repentance which are then promised for them, "when they come to age themselves are bound to perform;" and if they do not then perform the duties contracted for them, they cannot claim the benefits of the covenant which they have themselves broken.

Those who, adhering to the original and unvarying language of the Church, maintain Baptismal Regeneration, do not mean to deny that the best Christians require continual renewal, or that those must be converted who, by a course of sin, have weakened or extinguished the Grace bestowed in Baptism. The Ninth Article of our Church teaches, that "although there is no condemnation of them who believe and *are baptized*, yet even in them doth the infection of nature remain;" and we may, according to the Sixteenth, "after we have received the Holy Ghost, (that is in Baptism,) depart from grace given, and fall into sin." We pray therefore for the person about to be regenerated, that "all things belonging to the Spirit may *live* and *grow* in him." Now these words suggest the real meaning of spiritual life, which, like the natural, may be impaired or lost. The privileges of Baptism will be forfeited by those who cease to walk in newness of life, but they will be restored

to the penitent. Sinners, therefore, are exhorted in the epistles to be converted, and to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, but never to be born again; for Baptism, as the stipulated condition on God's part of granting salvation, is never to be repeated. This is the prescribed mode of the new birth, which, like the natural, can take place but once; and the Eucharist is one of the means of renovation; the soul which is born anew in the one Sacrament, being strengthened and refreshed in the other. It was customary to admit proselytes into covenant with God, under the Jewish Dispensation, by Baptism; and John had baptized the Jews themselves, though they had received the sign of Circumcision. Jesus now declared, that the entrance into his kingdom is by the same ceremony under his Dispensation; and John foretold that a change both of character and of state was required, and the latter must be manifested to the world by some rite. *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*^p. And Nicodemus, who shrunk from the avowal of his faith, was taught, that it is not enough to believe Jesus to be the Christ, but that his followers must publicly acknowledge him. The adult believer, then, who declines to be baptized, cannot be regenerated; for though he calls Christ, Lord, he does not obey his positive command; while he who comes in faith to that Sacrament, is *translated out of the kingdom of Satan*, and is at the same time *born again of the Spirit* by water, as an instrument, and obtains the remission of his sins, and the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. We must however never forget, that Sacraments do not act, as the Roman Catholics maintain, as charms, but are beneficial to those alone who worthily receive them. Thus Baptism does not confer justifying faith, but confirms and strengthens the faith which the believer must have previously possessed, or

^p Romans x. 10.

he would not have desired thus to show his death unto sin, and new birth unto righteousness, of which it is the sign and seal.

I conclude with the distinction drawn by Waterland^a between Regeneration and Renovation. "Man does not regenerate himself, whatever hand he may otherwise have (but still under grace) of qualifying himself for it. God makes the grant, and it is entirely his act; man only receives and is acted upon, though sometimes active in qualifying himself, as in adults, and sometimes entirely passive, as in infants. The grant is a translation from the curse of Adam into the grace of Christ; and brings with it remission of sins, (absolute or conditional,) and a covenant claim, for the time being, to eternal happiness. These blessings may be forfeited or finally lost, if a person revolts from God, either for a time, or for ever; but still God's original grant stands in full force to take place as often as any revolter shall return, and he will not want to be regenerated again, but to be renewed or reformed. The grant once made continues always the same; but the reception may vary, because it depends upon the condition of the recipient. Renovation is rather a capacity or qualification (in adults) for Regeneration than the Regeneration itself; it may and it should be in them, before, in, and after Baptism. Preventing grace must go before, to work faith and repentance: afterwards in Baptism, the Holy Spirit fixes, as it were, his dwelling, renewing the heart in greater measure; and if his motions are more and more complied with, the renewing grows through the whole course of the spiritual life."

This doctrine of Regeneration Jesus called earthly, because the nature of the new birth may be illustrated from earthly objects, and may be understood from its effects; and he proceeded to observe, that he has heavenly truths to disclose, which, not falling under the cognizance of experience, are

^a Regeneration stated and explained.

more hard to receive. Such are, his own incarnation, and his giving himself as a propitiatory sacrifice; for he went on to intimate, that the Messiah would not be, as the Jews expected, the avenger of their wrongs, and the restorer of their national liberty, but, by *his crucifixion, the Author of spiritual, eternal deliverance*, not to them only, but to the world; and he described himself as at once the *Son of Man*, and *the Son of God*. This doctrine, which Nicodemus could not then bear, Jesus expressed by a type, which would be understood after the event, and he purposely chose one out of the Old Testament, to show that this doctrine, as well as that of Regeneration, though the Scribes had not discovered it, was contained in the ancient Scriptures. They might have perceived its hidden meaning, if they had not been blinded by national pride; for they had read it in the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon, (if as probable anterior to Christ,) that *he that turned himself towards the brazen serpent was not saved by the thing he saw, but by the Saviour of all*^r: and any how it was a tradition, that as their ancestors who had been bitten were cured by looking at the image, so the bite by which the old serpent had injured Adam and all his posterity would be cured in the time of the Messiah. To all who expect deliverance from everlasting torments not from endeavours of their own, but from the unmerited mercy of the Deity, the image which Moses was ordered to erect is a most significant type of the Saviour; and it is most satisfactory to know from his own authority, that this is not the conjecture of a fanciful commentator, but the true interpretation of Divine Wisdom. The sufferer, whose want of faith substituted medicine for obedience to the divine command, died, whereas he who, in reliance on the promise, only looked at the image, was healed. Thus whoever by a simple act of faith believeth on the Son of Man lifted up

^r Wisdom xvi. 7.

on the Cross for his salvation, will obtain eternal life; for Jesus plainly declared, that the object of God in sending his Son into the world was to save it. He added, that it would not receive his testimony, and as that was supported by sufficient evidence, it was justly condemned; for the *light had come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil*. Whoever shuts his eyes and remains in voluntary darkness, is inexcusable.

22. *John again bears testimony to the superiority of Jesus.*

John iii. 22—36. *Mark* i. vi.

Jesus now left Jerusalem, but continued in Judæa, and his disciples, like the Baptist, baptized with water unto repentance; but Jesus did not baptize, because the baptism of the Spirit unto Regeneration, which was to admit members into his kingdom, was not to be instituted till that kingdom had been established by his resurrection. The spot chosen was probably Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where the nation had entered their own land, and from which John had removed, as we presume, not to interfere with his Master, to Ænon near Salim, remarkable, as the name implies, for its springs, and consequently well suited to his purpose. A dispute arose here between John's disciples and a Jew^a, concerning Purification. The question seems to have been, why Jesus, who had been baptized by John, should virtually declare the inefficacy of this baptism, by delegating the same office to his own followers. John's disciples, not comprehending the preparatory character of their master's ministry, were unable to give a satisfactory explanation; and by proposing to him the question, gave him, before its close, an opportunity of bearing his final testimony to the preeminence of Jesus, whom he announced as a Bridegroom, and called himself no more than his friend,

^a This reading, adopted by Chrysostom, is preferred by Griesbach to the received text, the Jews.

the paranymp, or, according to the eastern figure, *son of the bridechamber*[†], whose office it was to arrange the nuptials, present the husband to his bride, and remain with them during the wedding festival. The Song of Solomon, supposed to be in its literal sense an Epithalamium on his marriage with an Egyptian Princess, has always been spiritualized by Jewish commentators; and the correctness of their interpretation, however contrary it may be to our notions of propriety and taste, is confirmed by the mystic poetry of the Arabs and Persians, in which human passion is made

“a scale,

“By which to heavenly love thou may'st ascend.”

The Psalms and the Prophets also illustrate, though more sparingly, by “wedded love,” the intimate connection that subsists between Jehovah and his people. In the former, the Church is a *Queen in a vesture of gold*^u; in the latter, *her maker is her husband, the Lord of hosts is his name*^x. The figure is repeated in the New Testament by Paul, who writes, that he is *jealous with godly jealousy* over the Corinthians, *that he may present them as a chaste virgin unto Christ*^y; and he affirms marriage to be a type of the union of Christ with his Church^z: while John in the Apocalypse^a describes the New Jerusalem as *a bride prepared for her husband*. Now since from the beginning *the Israel of God*, under various dispensations, has been ever one and the same body, under the same Head, we cannot doubt that this title of Bridegroom, when applied to Jesus, identifies him with Jehovah. Our Lord^b Himself assumed it; and it was probably with a reference to this connection that, in describing the state in which he should find his followers at his second advent, he chooses the comparison of virgins waiting for a bridegroom's coming,

[†] Matt. ix. 15.

^u Ps. xl. 10.

^x Is. liv. 5.

^y 2 Cor. xi. 2.

^z Eph. v.

^a Rev. xxi. 2.

^b Matt. ix. 15.

in preference to others equally apposite. The Baptist declared, that this marriage, which had for his sake excited their envy, completed his joy. He reminded them, that he had never claimed any higher dignity than that of the Herald of the Messiah, and he foretold the increase of Jesus, and his own decrease. He confessed, that he, a mere man, could announce only earthly things; but that Jesus who came from heaven testified to the truth of what he had seen and heard, that is, to heavenly things, yet that, generally speaking, no man received his testimony. Yet those who did receive it, thereby acknowledged the veracity of God, in performing his promise through the Prophets of Redemption, by sending his Son, to whom he gave—not as unto them, that is, in greater or smaller proportion, and at certain seasons, but without measure, the Holy Spirit. Whosoever *believed in him* should have eternal life; as the Father who loved him had conferred upon him all power; but on those who *disobeyed him*, the original curse laid upon Adam, which through Christ alone could be removed, would abide.

Our translators have not preserved the distinction in the original between *he who believeth*, and *he who disobeyeth*; a variation, as Doddridge observes, not to be overlooked, since the latter word explains the former, and shows that the Faith to which the promise of eternal life is annexed, is an effectual principle of sincere and unreserved obedience. This explains our Lord's preceding declaration, that he was not *sent to condemn the world*, for the world was condemned already, but that through him *it might be saved*. All who come to him for salvation, he will deliver; and those who refuse to hear him, were already in a state of perdition. His coming, therefore, while it saves all who believe in and obey him, causes the ruin of none; only the wrath of God, under which all were before, still remains on those who will not come unto him for life; as the diseased, who reject the

medicine that would cure them, die in consequence of their own obstinate want of faith in their physician, who has not caused their malady, but might remove it if they would suffer him. A due consideration of this statement, which might be enforced by similar passages both from the Old and the New Testament, would silence some of the most specious objections of the infidel.

John had now fulfilled his ministry, by directing once more the nation to Jesus as the Messiah, and by showing that eternal life was suspended upon faith in him. He soon after removed from the desert to the palace of Herod, who did gladly many things which he recommended; but his favour was of short duration; for, reproving the Tetrarch with his adulterous connection with his brother's wife, he was at her instigation thrown into prison. The real cause of his imprisonment we learn from the Evangelists; Josephus^c states the ostensible one. Having described the Baptist as a good man, who persuaded the Jews to be religious and just, and to come to his baptism; he says, that Herod, fearing his influence with the people, for they seemed ready to do any thing he should advise, first imprisoned, and then put him to death. This speedy termination of his ministry seems designed by Providence, that the people might not be perplexed in their choice between these two teachers: and the imprisonment of the Baptist may be regarded as the epoch from which our Lord opened his commission.

23. *Jesus, on his road to Galilee, passes two days at Sychar.*

John iv. 3—42.

The next discourse of our Lord which has been preserved was with a person as much despised as Nicodemus was respected; a woman in low life, of bad character, and moreover a Samaritan. On John's being cast into prison, Jesus deemed it prudent to retire into Galilee, and he would of

^c Ant. xviii. 6.

necessity pass through Samaria. He could not have avoided it, without a considerable circuit; but probably, though his own mission was only to the Jews, and he would not suffer the seventy disciples to preach to the Samaritans any more than to the Heathen, he might seek an opportunity of once addressing to them words of life, and of gathering the first-fruits of that harvest, which was reaped not many years after his ascension. Jesus drew nigh to the town of Sychar, but knowing the unfriendly reception he was likely to meet, instead of entering it, sent forward his disciples to purchase provisions; and, wearied by travelling, sat down as he was by the well, called after the patriarch Jacob, from which he could derive no refreshment, as it was deep, and he had nothing to draw with. A woman, however, soon came for that purpose; and her coming gave him an opportunity, according to his custom, of extracting spiritual improvement out of the scene or occupation before him. He began the conversation by asking for a draught of water; and she expressed astonishment that there should be a Jew so free from the feeling common to his nation of aversion for hers, as to make even this trifling request, which was indeed expressly forbidden by the Pharisees. Without opposing her prejudices, which would not have convinced but irritated her, he contrasted under the veil of metaphor, the temporary effect that water produces upon the body, with the lasting benefit the Holy Spirit can confer upon the soul. He replied, that while she was disposed to refuse him, as a Jew, so small a favour, he was ready to grant her, though a Samaritan, if she had asked, a more precious gift, even living water, which would quench her thirst, not like this well for a season, but for ever. And this she would have done if she had known the bounty of God, and who he was who addressed her. As living water in their language, like running in ours, is opposed to dead or stagnant, she understood him literally;

he on the contrary spoke in a figure, common in the Prophets, of the refreshing influence of the Holy Spirit, that best gift of God, which if sought will be bestowed, and if bestowed will rectify the judgment and purify the heart. She, not conceiving his drift, *answered, The well is deep, and thou hast nothing to draw with*, whence then, if not from this well which sufficed to Jacob and his family, hast thou this water? To lead her to comprehend that he alluded to the wants not of the body but of the soul, he rejoined, that this water could answer only a temporary purpose, but that whosoever drinketh of the water which he should give, would not only never need any more himself, but would satisfy the thirst of others. How far she understood him is uncertain; but to prepare her for the reception of this primary truth, by convincing her of sin, the Divine Teacher desired her to call her husband. She had had as many as five, and probably had been divorced from all except the last, for she was not married to the man with whom she was then living. His brief recapitulation of her history, which might be unknown even to her neighbours, satisfied her that he was a prophet. She confessed her persuasion; and, perhaps, to divert the conversation from the painful and humiliating topic of her own sins, pointed to the adjacent mountain, and enquired, whether her countrymen, or the Jews, were right in the controversy respecting the spot upon which they ought to sacrifice. He decided in favour of the Jews; because from them was to proceed the Saviour; but he added, that the time had actually arrived, which should supersede disputes of this description, when no place or people would be preferred, but that God, himself *a Spirit*, should be worshipped every where by all with equal acceptance in *spirit*^d and in *truth*, that is, as we know,

^d It is painful to reflect, that this important aphorism should ever be forgotten by his followers; yet such is the tendency of man to substitute the forms for the spirit of religion, that the ceremonies of

though she could not have understood him, not only with the lips, but with the heart and life; and not under the adumbration of a ceremonial law of sacrifices, but faint with a clear knowledge of him as through Christ a reconciled Father. She made no objection to this new view of religion, but seemed disposed to leave the settlement of the question to the Messiah. In return he said, *I that speak unto thee am he*; for he had not the same reason for secrecy here as among the Jews, who, according to their disposition, were, as he was speaking, ready to accuse him as a traitor to the Romans, or to rebel in his favour.

Struck with awe, and agitated with joy, she left her waterpot, forgetful of the purpose with which she came, and hastened into the city, to invite the inhabitants to come and see this extraordinary Person, whom, because he had shown his knowledge of her whole history, she was disposed to regard as the Messiah. The notions the Samaritans entertained of the Deity were erroneous, for they worshipped *they knew not what*; and they did not receive the Psalms and the Prophets, which reveal the Messiah more clearly than the earlier books of the Bible; yet they seem to have had a more just conception of his character and offices than the Jews; and Jesus, who would not trust his own countrymen, announced himself to them at once without reserve, and they believed in him without the evidence of miracles. To many who soon flocked to him, the report of their countrywoman was sufficient; and others believed on hearing his

Paganism were soon introduced into the Church; and Christians returned to the beggarly elements of the Law, and brought back the altar and victim, and sacrificing priest. Even now so rare is it to *pray with the understanding*, that in the East as well as in the West, among Greek and Oriental as well as Roman Catholics, with the exception of Protestant communities, the public service is every where celebrated in dead languages, as ancient Greek, Syriac, Coptic, and Latin, in which scarcely any of the congregation can join!

discourses themselves; and this is the more surprising, since he did not conceal from them that *salvation was of* their opponents *the Jews*. The disciples on their return pressed him to partake of their provisons; but he was so absorbed in the prospect of opening usefulness, that he forgot hunger and thirst, observing, that he had food to eat which they knew not of. As they did not penetrate his meaning, he explained that the doing the will of him who sent him, was to him as it were food, which strengthened and refreshed him. An opportunity therefore of being so employed now presenting itself, he would postpone the satisfying his appetite; and he encouraged them to imitate him by the observation, that according to the ordinary saying, there were four months between seed time and harvest, but that the approaching multitude of the Samaritans, was as it were a field already ripening for the sickle. This was the good work in which he designed to employ them, as well as to labour himself; and, in this case, the Proverb, *one soweth, and another reapeth*, generally used in a bad sense, would be happily verified, for they would succeed to the ancient Prophets, and to the Baptist, and reap what they had sown, in which harvest the sowers rejoice, no less than they *who had entered into their labour*.

He passed but two days at Sychar, and this at the earnest request of the inhabitants. Thus by his own example he taught the abolition of the distinction between Jew and Samaritan; and Samaria was the first country invited to embrace the Gospel, when persecution had driven the first converts from Jerusalem. John, who was then sent with Peter to confirm the faith of this people, converted by Philip the Evangelist, now accompanied his Master. Luke^e had recorded John's resentment against their inhospitality on another journey; and it was natural that the latter evan-

^e Luke ix. 54.

gelist should introduce into his own supplementary Gospel this interesting narrative, more creditable to them.

The first three Gospels commence their account of our Lord's Ministry with his return to Galilee, which he opened with the very words of his appointed Forerunner, calling upon men to repent. The fame of that *Voice crying in the wilderness* had gone through the country preparing his way, *for all men held John for a prophet*; and all must have heard of the testimony which he had borne to Jesus, on his coming to him for Baptism. The direct road from Samaria to Cana would have been through Nazareth; but Jesus took another, in order to avoid it, that he might work his first public miracle in Galilee, at the town where he had begun among friends *to show forth his glory*.

24. *Jesus cures at a distance the son of an officer of Herod's court. John iv. 46—54.*

On his return to Cana, an officer of Herod's court solicited Jesus to accompany him a day's journey to Capernaum, to cure his son, who was dying of a fever. Some suppose him to have been Manaen, the Tetrarch's foster brother, named in the Acts^f as one of the Christians of Antioch; others, his steward Chusa, whose wife attended upon our Lord, and was one of the women who helped to maintain him. Jesus, to try his faith, said, *except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe*, whereas the Samaritans had been convinced without them. This courtier believed that Jesus could on the spot have restored his son to health, but it did not seem to have occurred to him that he could at a distance. To prove and to increase his faith, he ordered him to return home, assuring him that his son was recovered. He had only the word of Jesus for the fact, and there had been no similar cure, as far as we know. Notwithstanding,

^f Acts xiii. 1.

the officer had faith to believe. It is repeated, that when he learnt that the fever had entirely left his son at the very hour that Jesus spoke, *himself and his whole house believed*. We infer that he first believed the truth of the declaration, and that when he found it to be as he expected, he believed in Jesus as the Messiah. Faith appears to have been required as a previous condition for the performance of every miraculous cure, but it existed in different degrees of strength in different individuals. The centurion spoke with full assurance, *Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed*; the leper scarcely less confidently, *Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean*: the father of the demoniac, whom the Apostles tried in vain to cure, in fainter language, *If thou canst do any thing, have compassion upon us, and help us*. The faith of the last was alloyed with much doubt, yet Jesus did not despise *this day of small things*; and his case is recorded as an encouraging instance, how graciously he accepts and cherishes the feeblest efforts of a genuine reliance on him. The leper doubted his will, the father his power. This faith also varied in its nature; some, like the blind man of Jerusalem, only acknowledged him as a Prophet, others, like Bar Timæus, as the Messiah. To us his Death and Resurrection evince, that he is both able and willing to deliver his people from a worse malady, the power of sin.

25. *Jesus applies to himself Isaiah's prediction of the Messiah.*
Matt. iv. 13—17. Luke iv. 16—32.

Jesus now visited Nazareth, his own town, in which he had been educated, and, according to his custom, attended the Synagogue on the Sabbath. The reader was not required to be of the sacerdotal tribe: the ruler assigned the office to whom he pleased, and curiosity might now induce him to offer it to his townsman. The prophecy of Isaiah was the portion of Scripture delivered to him, and the section

which he read, (whether the Lesson of the day^g, or selected by him,) was eminently descriptive both of the nature and manner of the Messiah's teaching, and of the signs by which he confirmed it; and Jesus plainly tells his countrymen, that it is fulfilled in himself. The passage is thus rendered by Luke, chiefly in conformity with the Septuagint,

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he hath anointed me
To proclaim good tidings to the poor.
He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And recovery of sight to the blind^h,
[To set at liberty them that are bruised,]
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lordⁱ.*

Here he closed the volume, omitting the following clause,

The day of vengeance of our God,

wishing to fix their attention on the present year of jubilee, which beyond all others deserved that title.

He must have added, as customary, some exposition; for the Evangelist adds, that they admired his gracious words, and were astonished at his abilities, knowing that from his education as a carpenter's son he had not, like other teachers, had an opportunity of improving them. Still their prejudices were not subdued, and they reproached him in their hearts with not healing the diseased at Nazareth, his

^g According to the present order of Lessons which the Jews maintain to have prevailed then, this sixty-first chapter is to be read on the day before the Feast of Tabernacles; but it is remarkable that it omits this passage, not commencing till the tenth verse.

^h For, *recovery of sight to the blind*, the present Hebrew text hath, *opening the prison to the bound*; but *the eyes of the blind shall be opened*, occurs in another prophecy of Isaiah, xxxv. 5. The line in brackets is neither in the Hebrew nor the Septuagint, but is found in Isaiah lviii. 6. *and to let the broken go free.*

ⁱ Hales's Translation.

own city, as he had done at Capernaum among comparative strangers. He replied to their thoughts, for they do not appear to have uttered them, that they were not worthy, as they did not receive him even as a Prophet; and he justified his conduct by the example of Elijah and Elisha, who had worked miracles on the heathen, in preference to their own ungrateful and persecuting countrymen; the first on a Sidonian woman of Sarepta, the second on Naaman the Syrian. They were so enraged by his reproof, that they hurried him to the brow of the precipice on which Nazareth stood, to throw him down, but he eluded their fury, it should seem, by becoming invisible, and passed unseen through the crowd. He declined working a miracle, because they had already had sufficient evidence to satisfy any candid mind, and such as is irresistible, it is not in accordance with Divine Wisdom to grant. Our Lord has been reproached by objectors, for not informing the people explicitly of his office: this transaction proves the propriety, and indeed necessity, of caution. Here, almost at the commencement of his ministry, he avowed himself to be the Messiah, and the service of the Synagogue was terminated by their fury. We may suppose, that if in other places he had been equally open, he would have been disturbed by similar interruptions. Jesus now chose Capernaum for his ordinary abode, where he taught regularly on the Sabbath days; and thus the neighbourhood of the lake of Galilee became, as Isaiah had foretold^k, the chief scene of his public life. Several reasons might determine his choice, such as its populousness, and its distance from Jerusalem, the seat of the Scribes and Pharisees; for having made many disciples in Judæa, they took such offence, that he had deemed it prudent to retire into Galilee. He had also here Peter's house for a home, and the countenance, it may be presumed, of the officer of Herod's court, whose

^k Isaiah ix. 2.

son he had cured, if not of other leading inhabitants. The lake also afforded an easy passage to the neighbourhood, and would facilitate a retreat, whenever the jealousy of Herod, or the impatience of the multitude to proclaim his sovereignty, should make it advisable.

26. *The miraculous draught of fishes.* Luke v. 1—11.

Mark i. 16—20.

The curiosity and interest that Jesus excited in a populous country, exposed him to extreme inconvenience. He often therefore taught from a boat, which, while it kept the multitude from pressing upon him, was near enough to the shore for them to hear. On the first of these occasions recorded, after he had finished, he desired Peter, in whose boat he was sitting, to launch out into the deep water, into which he might cast his net. Nor was this a happy venture, for the eye of the Son of God pierced through the surface, and the fishes were drawn as it were by a magnet, because their lord had need of them. Peter, though unsuccessful the preceding night, the best season for fishing, obeyed, and his ready obedience, an evidence of faith, Jesus rewarded by a most extraordinary draught. So wonderful was the quantity, that the net brake: the boat was instantly filled, and that too of Zebedee, which hastened to assist; and such was the weight, that both were ready to sink. He required them to give up their trade, and follow him. The demand, and their immediate compliance, appear extraordinary; but Simon and Andrew, who were with the Baptist, had already become his disciples, on hearing their master's testimony to him as the Lamb of God. This we learn from the supplementary Gospel of St. John¹; and we infer from the narrative the same of the Evangelist himself, who probably had brought to him his brother James. Jesus had ordered Philip to accompany him into Galilee; he might

¹ John i. 40.

also require the presence of these, and they were, we conclude, among the disciples who were with him at the wedding at Cana. They seem to have been only in occasional attendance, and to have pursued their occupations till he chose twelve to be with him constantly. We are perhaps disposed to consider them as poorer than they really were: Simon and Andrew were in partnership with Zebedee and his sons James and John, and had hired servants under them. Peter, who was married, had a house; and his speech afterwards, *Lord, we have left all, and followed thee*, indicates that he must have had some property, at least the boat by which he gained a livelihood. Their ready acquiescence is also less surprising, if with most harmonists we consider the call in Matthew and Mark to be the same with that which Luke connects with the miraculous draught of fish; and his declaration in all three, *ye shall be fishers of men*, seems to confirm it. This event, emblematical of their future missionary success, would be a powerful encouragement to them to follow a Master, who thus proved himself to be at least a divinely-commissioned Teacher; and considerately showed, that he did not require them to abandon their fishing, without being able to maintain them. Peter, however, was satisfied that he was more; for his exclamation, *depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord*, marks his conviction of his Divine nature; and neither then, nor on any future occasion, did our Lord reject or condemn such an acknowledgment. His speech appears intelligible only on this supposition, and harmonizes with the fear of seeing the Almighty, so often expressed in the Old Testament; as by Manoah, *we shall surely die, because we have seen God*^m. Self-abasement is the first feeling of a conscience-stricken sinner, who shrinks from the presence of a holy God, who *searcheth the hearts and reins*; but the feeling which prompted this reply, and would have been mortified if the petition had been granted,

^m Judges xiii. 22.

must not be confounded with the speech of those who really wish to be left to themselves. The comparison ^a between their trade and the office to which they were called peculiarly suits the Missionary, who knows not whom his Gospel net may catch, what number, or in what direction. That of a shepherd, better represents the settled minister in a Christian land. This miracle, like that of the loaves, was, as it were, repeated. At the first miraculous draught Peter was appointed to his office; he was reinstated in it after the second. In the first the net breaks, the number is marvellous, and taken into the ship; in the second it is specified, and drawn to the shore. This, at the opening of the gospel history, like the parable of the net inclosing good and bad, typifies the church in the world; that the state of the elect in heaven. In the fisherman's calling are required dexterity, patience, and readiness to endure hardship; and the habits formed in it would be useful to the disciples, when they became fishers of men. A calling too, so variable in its returns, must have a greater natural tendency to bring out reliance upon Providence, than husbandry or any other occupation in which industry is ordinarily more regularly and more surely recompensed. Their faith in him that called them was soon confirmed by a succession of miracles, in which he demonstrated his power, not only over fish and diseases, but also over invisible spirits. .

27, 28. *Jesus works all manner of miraculous cures: those of a demoniac, and of Peter's wife's mother, are specified.*
Matt. viii. 14—17. and iv. 23—25. Mark i. 21—34.
Luke v. 18—26.

In the synagogue, a man under the dominion of an unclean spirit addressed Jesus as the Holy One of God. This testimony, whether forced by conviction or intended to injure him, he rejected as on other occasions, but commanded the

^a Trench on this Miracle.

spirit to leave the person he had enslaved; and having thrown him into convulsions, he, however reluctant, obeyed. This miracle, though wrought on the sabbath, is not said to have given offence; there might be no Pharisees present, or they might be glad to be freed from the annoyance of the demoniac. The congregation was astonished, but their astonishment produced no salutary effects. •

There are modern writers who endeavour to explain away demoniacal possession, because they hear of no instances of it, and know that the belief in it in former times has been abused by impostors. In so doing, however, they contradict the uniform doctrine of the Church; and they have been confuted by the most approved commentators, who show that greater difficulties embarrass their scheme than the received opinion. These objectors assume the Evangelists to have been under the influence of national prejudice; and that, as under the old dispensation, inspired authors like their contemporaries, being ignorant of the discoveries of modern science, wrote not in a philosophical but a popular manner, so our Lord accommodated himself to the language and notions of the Jews. They, however, overlook the distinction between natural and moral subjects, and the different effect of erroneous opinions on the two. A man who supposes that it is the sun and not the earth that moves, may, in moral and religious knowledge, be equal or superior to a scientific astronomer; but a belief in demoniacal possession, if false, must lead to errors of a practical nature; and we cannot suppose that our Lord would humour such by adopting their language, especially after their restoration to a sound mind. If the demoniacs had been insane, though some worshipped, others might have reviled him; but all these afflicted persons, or rather the demons who speak through their organs, *believe and tremble*, and evince a knowledge of his nature and office, which was hidden from the wise and prudent of the human race. His manner of arguing against those who charged him with

casting out demons through the cooperation of their prince, assumes the reality of possession, which he affirmed in a confidential discourse with the Apostles, when he said, *this kind goeth not out but with prayer and fasting*; and among the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit which he conferred upon them, he specified both curing the sick, and ejecting these unclean spirits. Paul's exercise of the latter is recorded in the cases of the damsel at Philippi^o, and of the seven Jewish exorcists at Ephesus^p. The Evangelists likewise discriminate between disease and possession, placing even lunacy under the former head, and state cases in which patients suffered from both. The possessed too is never described as under any mental delusion, but as struggling between his own will and that of the demon. The fact also is confirmed by a statement of their number in certain individuals; for Mary Magdalene is said to have been possessed by seven, and the Gadarene demoniacs by at least two thousand. The sufferings too of these wretched persons greatly varied in degree, we may conjecture, with the number of their tormentors. This demoniac of Capernaum could attend divine service, others dwelt apart from mankind in tombs, injuring themselves and others. Some when delivered from their oppressors were convulsed and left half dead, others seem scarcely to have been injured. In the English Testament these unclean spirits are called *devils*, but in the original, the Greek word so rendered, though applied in its primary sense to human accusers or calumniators^q, is restricted to their prince; and these are called *demons*, a term used by the heathen in a good sense to designate their inferior deities, who occupied a middle rank between their greater gods, and their heroes or deified mortals. A reverence for demons is the literal signification of the word, rendered in the Acts^r *Superstition*, but there it ought to be translated *Religion*, as the governor cannot be supposed to speak offensively of

^o Acts xiv.^p Acts xix.^q John vi. 70. 1 Tim. iii. 11.^r Acts xxv. 19.

his faith to king Agrippa; and the same remark I think applies to the use of the derivative from it in St. Paul's address to the Athenians.

Jesus immediately retired into Peter's house, where he cured his wife's mother, who was confined to her bed with a fever. She arose and waited upon them at their meal; and this seems to be mentioned to show that her recovery was so complete as not to have left the usual lassitude. The Protestant reader is struck with the fact thus incidentally noticed, that the prince of the Apostles, whom the Romanists describe as sole governor of the Church, had a wife, and he believes that the miracle has been partly recorded to confute their doctrine, that the clergy ought not to marry. They cannot plead, that he was a widower when sent forth after the Ascension to exercise his Apostolic office, for, according to Clement of Alexandria, she lived long enough to become a martyr; and if this be doubtful, we know, upon the sure testimony of St. Paul, that Peter availed himself of the right which that Apostle claimed, though he did not exercise it, of having a wife maintained, as well as himself, by his converts^s. The Greek Church, taking his instructions to Timothy^t and to Titus^u literally, goes into the contrary extreme, requiring her ministers to be married. The scriptural permission is expressed too strongly to be denied. The Council of Trent therefore enforces the celibacy of priests on account of its expediency, and pronounces it to be a question not of doctrine but of discipline, which may be abrogated by the proper authority. The decision upon such grounds appears to me more culpable than if it was founded upon a mistaken interpretation of Scripture, since it assumes the right of imposing upon a whole body of men a restriction never commanded by God, who has declared through an Apostle, that *marriage is honourable in all*^x, and our Lord pronounces to be a doctrine that all men cannot receive.

1 Cor. ix. 5. ^t 1 Tim. iii. 2. ^u Titus i. 6. ^x Heb. xiii. 4.

At sunset, when the sabbath was ended, the sick and demoniacs were brought to Jesus. He cured them all; and such was the sensation these miracles excited, that he found it expedient to retire before day-break to a desert, and afterwards to move about through Galilee, without making any long stay in one place. As wherever he went he taught in their synagogues, and cured all diseases, his fame spread far and wide, beyond the Holy Land, into all Syria; and multitudes followed him, not merely from Judæa and Galilee, but even from beyond the river.

Matthew represents these miracles as the fulfilment of that memorable prediction of Isaiah, which we, generally speaking, interpret exclusively of our Saviour's bearing in our stead the penalty of transgressing the divine law, which was certainly the primary thought in the prophet's mind; for he goes on to say, that it pleased Jehovah to make the burden, laid on this *man of sorrows, grievous*, and to make his soul *a sin-offering*. Our version of the original is,

*Surely he hath borne our griefs,
And carried our sorrows.*

And the Evangelist, to suit the words to his object, avails himself of their ambiguity to render them,

*Himself took our infirmities,
And bore our sicknesses.*

But as our Lord did not actually take upon himself our infirmities, as he did not our sins, ἐβάστασεν ought to be rendered *bore away*, as both that and the corresponding verb in Hebrew is by Magee^y, who was preceded in this translation by Coverdale. We learn from him, that it applies also to the taking away of bodily diseases, which are likewise consequences of Adam's offence; and our Lord connects the two together, when he appeals to his cure of the bed-ridden paralytic, as a proof of his having forgiven his sins. As ancient events prefigured those in the life of Christ, so

^y On Atonement, i. p. 409.

some of his own actions seemed to typify others. Health bestowed upon the body is a significant figure of purity restored to the mind; this prophecy therefore may be said to have been twice fulfilled; first, when he went about healing the sick; and, secondly, when by his death on the Cross he obtained the remission of our sins.

29. *Jesus miraculously cures a leper. Mark i. 40—45.*

Luke v. 12—16.

The next miracle was wrought on his own petition upon a person not slightly diseased, but *full of leprosy*. A word from Jesus would have effected the cure, but he chose to touch him, disregarding ceremonial uncleanness, and in curing him asserted his sovereignty, *I will, be thou clean*; adopting the words in which the leper clothed his petition, *if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*. Such a cure, by a word or a touch, must have been miraculous, for it wrought an immediate change in the system. In this cure he prefigured his power of forgiving sins, in that of the paralytic he declared it. The leprosy is an infectious disease of the skin, of slow progress, which during our intercourse with Palestine, through the Crusades, was not uncommon in our own country, as may be inferred from the hospitals founded for lepers, but is now of very rare occurrence. In hot climates it is accompanied by formidable symptoms, and is considered incurable. *Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?*² was the exclamation of the king of Israel on reading the letter of the Syrian monarch, who desired him to order the Prophet to cure his general Naaman. It was an emblem of the pollution of sin; and was regarded as a Divine judgment, probably because known to be such in the instances of Miriam, Gehazi, and Uzziah. Lepers were obliged to live apart, at a distance from habitations; not even kings were

² 2 Kings v. 7.

exempted from this law^a; and the sister of Moses, when leprous, had been put out of the camp^b. They were required to wear a particular dress, and to warn any that approached them of their condition; but this, it seems, was not because the disease was contagious, but because it rendered them unclean. The Law required, that the recovery from leprosy should be ascertained by a priest; our Saviour therefore charged this person to show himself to one, that he might offer the appointed sacrifice, which, like that of the scape-goat, peculiarly typified that sanctification could only be obtained through the future Deliverer. This would authenticate his cure, and thereby restore him to society; it would be at the same time a testimony to the mission of him who cured him. According to Matthew, he was forbidden to proclaim the cure; Mark adds, that he disregarded the prohibition. One reason of it was, that such crowds were drawn to Jesus by the report of his miracles, that he was now, as often afterwards, obliged in consequence to retire into the wilderness. Another, why he enjoined, as in this instance, silence on Jews, was, that the priests might not deny the cure, and that he would not needlessly exasperate his enemies, and so urge them on to premature designs against him. When he wrought miracles on heathens, or persons dwelling among them, as in the case of the Gadarene demoniacs, he bade them declare what God had done for them, for it was only from the declaration of the Jews that he was likely to suffer. Attention to the circumstances of persons will in this, as in other cases, remove apparent inconsistency. This injunction to secrecy seems to have been generally disregarded.

^a 2 Kings xv. 5.

^b Numb. xii. 14.

30. *Jesus forgives the sins of a paralytic man, and restores the use of his limbs. Mark ii. 1—12. Luke v. 17—26.*

This miraculous cure was followed by another of a paralytic man, who, being unable to walk, was carried upon a bed by four persons, the strength of whose faith appears from the obstacles it overcame. Jesus was then in the house discoursing before no common audience, but an assembly of doctors from Jerusalem and every town of Judæa and Galilee, when this suppliant was unexpectedly brought before him. The crowd at the door was impassable; the bearers therefore mounted the outer staircase with the paralytic, and let him down on his couch through the opening in the roof. The reply of Jesus must have astonished them all. It was, *Son, be of good cheer*,—adding not, the use of thy limbs are restored to thee, but—*thy sins are forgiven*. He might know that the disease proceeded from intemperance, and that the sufferer was more distressed by the cause than the effect. No doubt he had also in view the instruction of his audience, for his speech shocked them as a blasphemous invasion of the prerogative of God. Instead of denying their position, *who can forgive sin but God alone?* he tacitly acknowledged its truth, for he proceeded to show, by the bodily cure of the patient, that he, the Son of Man, possessed this prerogative. Omnipotence was alike required to restore the use of this sufferer's limbs, or to forgive his sins; and the proof they had of the first, ought to have satisfied them that Jesus could remit the latter, though from its nature such power could not be exhibited to their senses. His speech also showed that he possessed another attribute of the Deity; for his reply was not to their words, but to their thoughts, which on this occasion they did not venture to express. His conclusion they would not acknowledge, but they were amazed and silenced, while the patient was so perfectly restored as to be able, as com-

manded, to walk home, carrying his bed; and the spectators, as well as he, glorified God, saying, we have seen to-day incredible things.

31. *Matthew is called, and obeys. Matt. ix. 9. Mark ii. 14. Luke v. 27, 28.*

After this, a Publican, who was sitting at his office by the lake side to receive the duties upon goods, was invited by Jesus to follow him. Without hesitation he renounced the profession which maintained him, to become the disciple of a Master, who offered him in exchange only toil and suffering and reproach. He became the first historian of his ministry, and records this transaction, but without any commendation of himself. Living in Capernaum, he must have seen some of the miracles of Jesus, and had probably heard his discourses; nor is it an unreasonable supposition, that, like those Apostles who had been called to be fishers of men, he also might before have occasionally attended on him. The tribute of the Roman provinces was farmed by the order of Knights; the publicans of the gospels were those to whom they underlet them, and, we may presume, were generally natives, and some of them wealthy. Zacchæus, who is styled a chief publican, a receiver, probably, of all the taxes of Jericho, was both; and this Galilean, on quitting his profession, was rich enough to provide an entertainment for his new Master. The three Evangelists connect it with his call, but they do not say that it followed it immediately; and harmonists in general, I think with reason, place it after the return from the country of the Gadarenes. He is called Levi by Mark and Luke, but is better known to us under the name of Matthew, which he gives himself. The office of collecting taxes, in its very nature unpopular, becomes odious in the eyes of any nation, when levied for the support of a foreign power; but the Jews had special reasons to regard it as

infamous in their countrymen, since it not only brought them into familiar intercourse with despised Gentiles, but showed that they regarded the payment as a confession of the right of the Romans to govern them, and therefore a virtual rejection of the sovereignty of God. Our Saviour might purposely choose an Apostle out of this despised class, to reprove this national prejudice. We may perceive from the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, that the latter was considered as nearly synonymous with extortioner. They had indeed strong temptation to enrich themselves, by exacting more than was due, especially in a province remote from the seat of government; and the low estimation in which they were held, would be at once both cause and effect of dishonesty. Yet, as there were Pharisees who were not hypocrites, so, no doubt, there were Publicans who were exceptions to the general character; and nothing is hinted against the integrity of Matthew.

PART IV.

32. *The cure of the cripple at Bethesda. John v.*

Jesus was now attracted to Jerusalem by one of the feasts; which is not recorded, but it is guessed by some of the most approved commentators to have been the Passover, and if it be correctly connected by harmonists with the incident of the disciples rubbing together the ears of corn, A.D. 29, they are probably right in their conjecture. The day, a sabbath, was chosen by Jesus, as affording an opportunity of publicly showing himself as the Messiah. The place was a deep open natural bath near the sheep (gate), which had acquired the name of Bethesda^a, House of Mercy, and was enclosed^a by five colonnades, under which *the*

^a Since the time of the Empress Helena, the name has been given to a large excavation near St. Stephen's gate, which has been long dry. The ellipsis, it is generally understood, ought to be supplied, not by *market*, as by our translators, but by *gate*. Nehemiah iii. 1.

blind, halt, and withered lay in hope of a cure. The Received Text describes them as waiting for the moving of the water; for an Angel went down at a certain season, and troubled the water; whosoever then first after the troubling stepped in, was made whole of whatever disease he had. The passage is not noticed by Nonnus, in his Metrical Paraphrase of this Gospel, and is wanting in the best MSS.; still the speech of the sufferer seems to require it; and if we retain it, (and I think its genuineness is favoured by the difficulty of interpreting it satisfactorily,) we must consider that the Evangelist is only responsible for the fact of our Lord's miracle, which must have been known to the whole city; and in assigning the cause, only states the common belief. The pool is assumed to have been formed by a mineral water, the efficacy of which was produced by its agitation; but the agency has been much discussed, being attributed by some to a messenger of God, by others to a messenger or inferior officer of the temple. We are so accustomed to limit the Greek word ἄγγελος, Angel, to the ministering spirits of God, that we are apt to forget that they are generally marked as such by the addition of God's name, and that when the noun stands alone as here, it may be meant of a human being. Such I understand to have been Peter's angel, and probably the angels on account of whom St. Paul^b determines that the women ought to have power [a veil] on their heads. And no one doubts concerning the nature of that whom Malachi^c foretells is to be sent to prepare the way of Jehovah, or of the Angels who presided over the seven churches of Asia. Whatever agency was employed, it is not unreasonable to imagine, with Lightfoot, that it might please God just before the coming of the Messiah to provide this natural type of a better Bethesda, that fountain to be opened^d for moral uncleanness, not at a certain season, but at all; not only in Jerusalem, but in

^b 1 Cor. xi. 10.

^c Malachi iii. 1.

^d Zech. xiii. 1.

all places; not only for one, but for all spiritually *impotent folk*, who to be pure, must be cleansed by the washing of regeneration, and the renewal of the Holy Spirit.

The man selected from the multitude had been suffering thirty-eight years from debility, occasioned by sin, and was too poor to pay any person to help him into the bath. Notwithstanding, he persevered in waiting, though in his case a cure seemed to be impossible. Jesus not only cured him, but ordered him to carry his bed, which would give his cure the greatest publicity. The subject of the miracle entertained, we may presume, the opinion of his countrymen respecting the sabbath. The trial therefore of his faith was heightened, when he was called upon not only to take up his bed, an apparent impossibility, but to do it on a day on which the carrying of a burthen was forbidden not by tradition, but by the Law; for this was one of the breaches of the sabbath, which Jeremiah^t had been commissioned to declare would kindle a fire that should devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and which Nehemiah had been careful to correct^u. The man was convinced, however, that the person who commanded this breach of the sabbath had been endued with power from God; and his miraculous cure satisfied him that he was entitled as a Prophet to dispense with the Law. Jesus withdrew, but afterwards meeting the man in the Temple, admonished him to sin no more; and he told the Jews, that is, probably, the Sanhedrim, who was his Benefactor, but it does not appear from a bad motive. If candid, they would have believed that a satisfactory reason could be shown, why the commandment should be broken, for the sake of a cripple who had been so long a sufferer; but that would not justify the carrying his bed, which was neither a work of necessity, nor of charity: Jesus, therefore, takes a higher ground than on other similar occasions, and asserts that he is not amenable

^t Jeremiah xvii. 21—27.

^u Nehemiah xiii. 19.

to the Law; *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*; an argument which could have no weight or even meaning in the mouth of one who was only such a man as themselves. His hearers rightly considered it as equivalent to claiming equality with God; and instead of denying their conclusion, or explaining away his own declaration, he goes on to confirm it by asserting, that the Son of God performs the same works as the Father, who has given to him the power of doing even more extraordinary ones than this, as the restoration of life to the dead, making him to have life in himself, and has assigned to him the final judgment of all men, because he is also the Son of man, declaring thereby to those that had ears to hear, that in his Person were joined together the Divine and the human nature. The reason he gives for this appointment is, that he may receive from men equal honour; and he adds, that *he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that hath sent him*. The Anti-Trinitarian pleads; that the worshipper of Christ robs the Father of the honour due to him alone; but how can any Christian, who believes these to be his Master's words, dare to disobey so positive a command, or persuade himself that he honours the Father by refusing to act according to his will? Obedience is the honour he specially requires, and those who perversely withhold from his co-equal Son the homage of praise and prayer, are deprived of all excuse by the Apostle Paul, who expressly assures the Philippians*, that confessing Jesus Christ to be the Lord, is *to the glory of God the Father*. We who know that his resurrection declared Jesus to be the Son of God, and believe that he now sitteth on the right hand of the Majesty on high, having all power in heaven and on earth, acknowledge the reasonableness of his claim; but it appeared no doubt an extraordinary one to those who saw him only in the form of a man. Jesus, therefore, did not require their belief on

* Philipp. ii. 11.

his simple assertion, but abundantly supported it by evidence which no ingenuous mind could resist. First, he appealed to the testimony of the Baptist, by their own confession an inspired teacher; in whose *light they were willing for a season to rejoice*; and next, to testimony more decisive than that of any man, the testimony of God himself. This is generally supposed to be an appeal to the Voice from heaven, which proclaimed him at his Baptism to be God's beloved Son; but this interpretation is hardly compatible with the declaration that immediately follows, *ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape*. I conclude, therefore, that he appealed to this testimony as manifested indirectly by *the works which the Father had given him to finish*, and more directly in the Scriptures which they searched^v, thinking that in them they had eternal life, and which so plainly revealed him, that Moses who wrote concerning him, and in whom they trusted, would accuse them of wilful blindness in not acknowledging him. He ended with saying, *if ye believe not his writings, how will ye believe my words?* that is, as paraphrased by Euthymius, if ye disbelieve the writings of one whom ye boast that ye especially reverence, how will ye believe the words of one whom ye so studiously dishonour and revile?

There are persons who call themselves Christians, who, like these Jews, cannot discover Christ in the Pentateuch; yet surely this speech should convince them, that they, like these, have hitherto read it with a veil over their hearts. Moses expressly referred them to the Prophet who should be raised up to them *out of their brethren*^z, his whole ritual was typical of Christianity; and the Baptist's calling Jesus

^v Our version puts this in the imperative mood, "Search the Scriptures;" but with Campbell, Lampe, and other modern translators, I have taken it as the acknowledgment of a fact, which I think better suits the context.

^z Deut. xviii. 15.

the Lamb of God, and his own comparison of himself to the brazen serpent, are alone sufficient to justify the remark. Jesus told them that they could not believe; but their inability was of a moral, not a physical, nature: they could not, because they would not; it proceeded not from a defect of understanding, which would have been innocent, but from a want of inclination, which made them sinful. The cause was, they had no real love of God, though they affected to be jealous of his honour; but, as Jesus said, preferred to his approbation the praise of men. They afterwards followed false Messiahs, who accommodated themselves to their carnal expectations; but the true one they would not receive. Nay, they even sought to kill him, both for this breach of the sabbath, and because by calling God his own Father, in a peculiar exclusive sense he had made himself his equal^a. It became therefore necessary that he should withdraw out of their reach, and consequently he made no stay in Jerusalem.

33. *The disciples pluck ears of corn, and rub them in their hands on a Sabbath. Matt. xii. 1—8. Mark ii. 23—28. Luke vi. 1—5.*

This miracle is followed by two facts, which likewise took place on a Sabbath day, and gave Jesus an opportunity of laying down the principle which ought to regulate its observance,—the benefit of man. The first was, the seemingly unimportant incident of his disciples plucking and eating ears of corn, as they walked through the fields. The first occurred on a Sabbath, which Luke calls Deuteroprote, and means, I apprehend, the first Sabbath after the second day of unleavened bread, upon which the first-fruits of the harvest were offered, a period which suits the narrative.

^a It is to be regretted, that our translators have much enfeebled this passage by leaving out ἰδιον, *own* or *peculiar*, which could be said with propriety of none but him, the Monogenes, the *only-begotten* Son of God. John v. 18.

This plucking and rubbing of ears of corn was prohibited by tradition as a sort of reaping. It was not an inconsiderate mode of ascertaining if the corn were ripe, but was really prompted by hunger; for our Saviour silenced the objectors by the example of David^b, who, on his flight from Saul, fainting for want of food, ate of the loaves of the presence, which was only lawful for the priests, and it was probably on the Sabbath, on which day they were removed from the table in the sanctuary. They did not blame David, because necessity excused his dispensing with a ceremony; and Jesus proceeded to observe, that such a rigid observance of the Sabbath was impracticable, as the temple service of the day must have ceased, unless the priests had been allowed on it to prepare and slay the victims. They would have conceded, that the service of God was a lawful exception; he therefore anticipated them by adding, *one greater than the temple is here*; intimating, that if the priests were blameless for an unavoidable breach of the Sabbath when incompatible with a higher duty, no censure ought to attach to his disciples if they broke it by their attendance on a Master, who was more truly than that *worldly sanctuary* the temple of God; which when he had cleared its courts of the traders, he had declared to be typical of himself. Nor would they have pronounced this severe and unfounded condemnation, if they had recollected Jehovah's admonition through Hosea^c, *I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings*. He ended with a weighty aphorism, which impartially studied and followed out would preserve Christians as well as Jews from any abuse of a divine institution, *the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath*; adding, that the Son of man was *Lord of the Sabbath*, and being so, it follows that he may regulate it, and, when he saw fit, dispense with its observance.

^b 1 Samuel xxi.^c Hosea vi. 6.

34. *Cure of a man with a withered hand in a synagogue.*

Matt. xii. 9—15. Mark iii. 1—6. Luke vi. 6—11.

On another Sabbath, after teaching in a synagogue, probably that of Capernaum, Jesus miraculously restored to a man the use of his withered and contracted right hand. The man had no doubt the same prejudices as his countrymen; but there was something in the manner of Jesus, that satisfied him that they were unfounded, and therefore his cure was the reward of his faith. Christ ordered him to stretch out his hand. The power of doing this was all that was required; had he refused, pleading inability, his hand would have continued as it was, but he *endeavoured* to obey the order, and in the *endeavour* he obtained the *power*. So, in moral precepts, whatever God commands us to do, he likewise promises to do for us. Thus he commands by Ezekiel^d, *Make you a new heart and a new spirit*; and he promises by the same Prophet^e, *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you*. Whatever metaphysical difficulties may present themselves in the attempt to reconcile our freedom of action with the Divine decrees, still the language of the Bible is plain; *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean^f*, saith the Almighty. Are we then to do nothing, but simply wait for the accomplishment of his pleasure? No; certainly no more than the cultivator of the soil, who ploughs and sows not the less diligently, because it is *God that giveth the increase*; for after these positive promises it is added, *I will yet for this be enquired of, to do it for them*. It is our duty then both to work and to pray. We must exert ourselves as much as if all was in our power; our reliance upon Divine aid must be as strong as if we could do nothing. In this instance alone of the many in which his contemporaries reversed the Divine demand, *I will have*

^d Ezek. xviii.

^e Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

^f Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

mercy and not sacrifice, we are informed that our Saviour's indignation was excited. *He looked round about with anger*, yet his anger was combined with pity for those who had provoked it. He was *grieved for the hardness of their hearts*. There does not appear to have been any violation of the Sabbath, even according to their traditions, for the man only stretched forth his hand. The cripple of Bethesda had really broken the law, but these supposed violations of it were but the far-fetched burdens; too heavy to be borne, which interpreters laid upon men's shoulders. The forbidden works are classed by the Rabbis under twenty-nine general heads; but even had these miracles violated the Mosaic Sabbath, they were justifiable; the first as a work of necessity, the second of mercy. And indeed, according to their own interpretation, a true miracle, as wrought with the consent of the Author of the law, carries with it its own vindication. Our Lord on this occasion silenced objectors, by an appeal to their own conduct. If a Jew did not scruple to take out of a pit his sheep, which fell into one on the Sabbath, either out of regard to his property or compassion to the animal; could they reasonably object to his delivering, on that day, a man from a disease, or restoring to him the use of a limb? This act would have produced on candid minds a change of conduct, if not an acknowledgment of error; but these perverters of the Sabbath were only irritated by it to such a degree, as to deliberate with the partizans of Herod for his destruction. He therefore retired to the lake side, where multitudes followed him; and on all who required it he seems to have wrought miracles, healing many, and ejecting unclean spirits. The eagerness of the common people to hear him is contrasted with the captiousness and malignity of the Pharisees. And the crowds that he attracted were greater than a careless reader supposes. Here we have specified a great multitude from Galilee, Judæa, Peræa, and even

Idumea, and another great multitude from the neighbourhood of Tyre and Sidon. This Matthew^g represents as the fulfilment of Isaiah's^h description of the Messiah.

*Behold my servant, whom I have chosen,
My beloved, in whom my soul is well-pleased.
I will put my Spirit upon him,
And he shall show judgment to the Gentiles.*

The citation concludes with,

Andⁱ in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

And the mention of Tyre and Sidon in connection with it shows that these acts of mercy were not limited to the house of Israel.

On the Perpetual Obligation of the Sabbath.

As the rigid and servile observance of the Sabbath is censured so often by our Lord, there are persons in the present age, when the opposite error has succeeded, who justify the laxity of their own practice from his example and remarks. His example, however, when he dispenses with it, cannot be pleaded by us, who are not, like him, *Lord of the Sabbath*; and his remarks do not extend beyond works of necessity and charity. As he confirms the Old Testament assurance, that God prefers mercy to sacrifice, we need not scruple to omit the appropriate employment of the day, when it interferes with this paramount duty. But let us not deceive ourselves, but remember, that whatever can be done as well on the following day, cannot be fairly said to interfere with it. If every seventh day is to be consecrated to his service, (and by calling it the Lord's day we profess as much,) the commandment will not be fulfilled by an attendance on public worship, which can occupy but an inconsiderable part of it. Few, it is granted, can devote the whole to God; and some will need more

^g Matt. xii. 17.

^h Isaiah xlii. 1.

ⁱ *The isles shall wait for his law.* Heb.

intermission of the duty than others; but how our time should be divided between innocent relaxation and religious occupation, such as meditation, self-examination, private prayer, and the perusal of devotional books, and above all of the Word of God, must be left to each individual's discretion: only let him remember, that what is a duty, is at the same time blessed by the God of Grace; and that if he follow the Prophet's direction of *not doing his own ways, or finding his own pleasure, or speaking his own words*, on God's holy day, he will, though it may at first be irksome, in the end find that it is justly called *a delight*^k, and will rejoice at its return. Worldly business desecrates it no less than worldly pleasure. Travelling or riding is a gross violation of it, which occasions its violation by others, and deprives animals of the rest which their Creator has kindly designed for them. The man of business should suspend on this day of rest his worldly concerns, and the student should refrain from secular study. Our Saviour's rule is, *the Sabbath was made for man*, that is, for the promotion of his true welfare; and as man is an immortal being, responsible to his Maker for his conduct, the end of the institution will be best attained by such employment of it as will qualify the soul for a happy eternity. Still, as man is a compound being, the body is not to be neglected; and the very name applied to the seventh day, and the reasons assigned for hallowing it, show, that rest from labour was the primary object of its appointment. To the great majority, who earn their *bread in the sweat of their face*, this interval of cessation from toil has been found, by experience, to be essential to the maintenance of health and cheerfulness; nor is it less necessary to those whose pursuits occupy and fatigue the mind. To both classes a stated recurrence of rest and recreation is desirable; nor can we justly blame them, if they seek refreshment from social intercourse with their relatives and intimate friends.

^k Isaiah lviii. 13.

The Sabbath is not a fast, but a feast; it should therefore be kept as a day of rejoicing; still, our rejoicing should be within such limits, as will not interfere with the rest to which others have a right as well as ourselves; and in such a spirit as is compatible with keeping it holy to him, who, though he through his Providence is ever acting, rested on it from the work of creation, that all his creatures might enjoy every seventh day a cessation from labour; and that those whom he had endowed with reason might devote it to his service, and to their own spiritual improvement. Bacon, after observing that God hath ceased from creating since the first Sabbath, governing indirectly through nature, exempts from this law, which controls matter, his ways with spirits, which he reserves to be regulated by his secret will and grace; adding, that he resteth not from redemption as he resteth from creation, but continueth that work till an eternal Sabbath shall ensue. And whensoever God doth transcend the law of nature by miracles, (which may ever seem as a new creation,) he never cometh to that pass, but in regard of this which is the greatest, and whereto all his signs do refer.

Few will deny that such an employment of the Lord's day would be rational and edifying, but all will not allow that it is enjoined by Divine authority; for some with Paley (in his *Moral Philosophy*) maintain, that the fourth commandment is no longer binding. The Church of England, however, by incorporating the Decalogue into her Liturgy, and by putting into the mouth of the congregation a petition for grace to keep each commandment, pledges her members to the religious observance of one day in seven; and her decision is in conformity with the opinion of the great majority of divines, of other denominations as well as of her own communion. For a full refutation of plausible objections, which the nature of this work permits me only to notice briefly, I refer the reader to President Edwards¹, Dr. Dwight^m, and Bishop

¹ Sermons, vol. vii.

^m iv. 1—54.

Horsleyⁿ. It is obvious, that those who deny the perpetuity of the Sabbath, must endeavour to show that it was an ordinance peculiar to the Jews, and that as such it was to be abolished with the rest of the Ceremonial Law. Now it must be allowed that Jehovah thus speaks by the prophet Ezekiel^o concerning his ancient people, *I gave them my Sabbaths to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctifieth them*; and Paley argues, that to be such a sign, the observance of it must be limited to them. I observe in reply, that though the Sabbath be also a type of the rest promised in Canaan; and in the repetition of the fourth commandment in Deuteronomy^p, the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt is assigned as the reason for keeping it holy; these are only new reasons, which could not supersede the original one announced before, when the command was given from mount Sinai. No subsequent declaration could release the Israelite from the obligation of commemorating on the seventh day the Creator resting from creation, unless it had been formally repealed; and this obligation clearly does not arise out of the Sinai covenant, but is binding upon him not as a child of Abraham, but as a descendant of Adam. The inspired historian of the creation concludes his narrative with informing us, that God sanctified the seventh day, because on it he had rested from all his works. The natural and all but universal interpretation would determine the dispute; for a commandment given to the parents not of the Israelites exclusively, but of all nations, would have been obligatory on all their descendants. The end too of the institution holds out the same universality of application. Paley therefore is forced to assume, that the words declare only the reason for which God sanctified the Sabbath, not the time when it was done; forgetting it should seem that the reason which was good in the time of Moses, was no less good in that of Adam.

ⁿ Sermons, 21—53.^o Ezekiel xx. 12.^p Deut. v. 12—15.

An arbitrary supposition, so much at variance with the usual unaffected simplicity of the writer, could only have occurred to one who felt the natural interpretation to be subversive of his hypothesis. Rejecting the received account of the appointment of the Sabbath, he is obliged to seek for a subsequent one, and he thinks he has found it in the declaration of Moses in the wilderness, when the elders reported that a double portion of manna had been gathered on the sixth day of the week¹; *To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath to the Lord*. Most who read the passage will, I think, agree with me, that his language is that of one reminding others of a known, yet probably neglected, duty; and the word *Remember*, which introduces the fourth commandment, is also more suitable to the reenactment of an obsolete ordinance, than to the recent promulgation of a new one. That commandment is generally considered as establishing the perpetuity of the Sabbath; but an ingenious attempt has been made to deprive it of its universal application, by showing, that it is not, like the rest, a moral, but only a positive, precept. The distinction, however, will be found to fail, when we consider, that the Sabbath was intended to give all mankind an interval of rest, during which they might serve their Creator, and that such an interval was not more requisite for a Jew, than for the other descendants of Adam. The duty of social worship is admitted by both parties; yet unless a particular day be previously set apart, and that by an authority to which all will submit, its due performance will be impracticable. Our conclusion is strengthened by the consideration, that the other nine commandments are allowed to be universally binding; for it is most improbable that one should essentially differ from all the rest, and should, if it were not of a moral nature, have been included in the Decalogue, promulgated with such awful solemnity, that not only the people *intreated that the*

¹ Exodus xvi. 23.

word should not be spoken to them any more, but even Moses said, *I exceedingly fear*^r. Twice, as it should seem to mark that it was never to pass away, was the Decalogue engraven on tables of stone by the finger of God himself, whereas the rest of the Law was not even spoken to the assembled nation, but apart to Moses, and he was ordered to write it. The perpetuity of the Sabbath may also be inferred from the Divine blessing both *on the sons of the strangers and on the eunuchs, who keep it from polluting it*; which Isaiah^s was commissioned to announce. The Mosaic law forbade the admission of the latter into the congregation; yet in this prophecy, *they*, as well as *the outcasts of Israel*, are described as *worshipping and made joyful together* in God's temple, here declared to be *a house for prayer for all nations*. There can therefore be no doubt that it refers to the Gospel dispensation. The parallel drawn in the Epistle to the Hebrews between resting from the works of creation and of redemption, has also convinced some eminent theologians, that there *remains* in this sense *to the people of God the keeping of a Sabbath*^t. But the strongest argument is derived from the language of the Lord of the Sabbath, who strongly and repeatedly condemned a superstitious and uncharitable manner of keeping it, yet never made a remark that has a tendency to annul or even lessen the obligation. He charged them to pray that their flight from Jerusalem should not be on the Sabbath day; and his declaration, that *it was made for man*, implies that it was designed to continue as long as the race for whose sake it was made. I conclude from these premises, that the commandment was prior to the grant of manna, and that it was given immediately after the creation to our first parents in Paradise before their fall, and that the day which was the seventh to God, and the first of their existence, was consecrated to his service. If the conclusion be correct, the obligation is not

^r Heb. xii. 19—21.^s Isaiah lvi.^t Heb. iv. 9.

impaired by the abrogation of the Mosaic code, even if we give up the fourth commandment, but continues binding on all their posterity to whom it was transmitted by tradition; for Homer and Hesiod, the earliest of profane writers, call the seventh day holy; and Josephus says, "no city of Greeks or Barbarians can be found which does not acknowledge this period of rest from labour."

The change of day is the principal difficulty, but it is by no means an insurmountable one. The institution obviously consists of two parts, the Sabbath, or holy rest, and the day on which it is to be observed. These are kept distinct from each other in the original enactment. The Lord rested on the *seventh* day, and blessed the *Sabbath* day, and hallowed it. The keeping holy one day in seven I regard as an ordinance for ever; and this ordinance may be kept as beneficially on the first day of the week as on the seventh, and also as properly, if the festival be transferred by a competent authority. None, we allow, is competent but that which enjoined it. The change is not affirmed in Scripture; but Christians with few exceptions believe, that there are passages from which it may be inferred; and we know, that those who could not be ignorant of the practice of the Apostles, as Irenæus, Justin Martyr, and Ignatius, kept the Sabbath on the Lord's day. St. Paul's instructions to the Corinthians^u, to lay by on the first day of the week, and the manner in which he passed it at Troas^x in preaching and breaking of bread, afford a strong presumption, that the change had then taken place; and the Apocalypse informs us, that Sunday had, in St. John's time^y, obtained its appropriate title, which it probably had enjoyed from the time that the Lord made it peculiarly his own, by rising on it from the grave. We infer, that the Apostles, whom he had authorized to bind and to loose, had been instructed to substitute the first day instead of the seventh for the

^u 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

^x Acts xx. 7.

^y Rev. i. 10.

Sabbath of the new Dispensation; and the Author of both seems to have prepared his people for the change, even in the promulgation of the old, by appointing the first day of the week for the festival of Pentecost, on which Christianity was first announced, and was accredited by the descent of the Holy Ghost, *when the law went forth*, instead of Sinai, *from Zion*. The cxviiith Psalm, memorable for its prediction of our Saviour's triumphant Resurrection, declaring this to be *the day which the Lord has made*, invites the Church to rejoice in it. The Sabbath, after falling into disuse, was revived in the wilderness, as a sign between God and his chosen people^z, to keep them from relapsing into idolatry, by reminding them that on that day they were delivered from the Egyptian house of bondage. As such it ceased with the Jewish economy; but the patriarchal Sabbath, which commemorates creation, is unaffected by this abrogation; and though Christianity has transferred it to another day, it has not abolished but strengthened the institution, by superadding to its original intention a devout acknowledgment of the superior blessing of Redemption, that is, of the creation of the new-man, not like Adam, only in innocence, but like Christ, in *righteousness* and true *holiness*^a. We maintain that God *hallowed* a seventh portion of time from the beginning, that all men might also hallow it; and let us never forget, that he has also *blessed* it. All must perceive that it is a blessed institution to the lower classes, as far as their temporal good is concerned; and if we have any spiritual discernment, we shall discover that it is still more blessed to the soul without distinction of rank. It is a fact, that, in proportion as the Sabbath has been honoured in any country, religion and morality have flourished; and he who instituted it has often set his seal to the appointment, by making his ministers on this day the instruments of converting sinners, and of strengthening and improving his faithful servants.

^z Ezekiel xx. 12.^a Eph. iv. 24.

35. *The appointment of the twelve Apostles. Matt. x. 1—4.
Mark iii. 13—19. Luke vi. 12—16.*

We have already seen, that Jesus had chosen out of those who believed in him a select few, to impart to them, in the first instance, more fully and confidentially the doctrines, which in due season, after his final departure, they, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, were to communicate to the world. He now called them to a constant attendance: and henceforward they never left him, except by his command, when he sent them forth on a mission, strictly limited to their countrymen. He afterwards conferred upon them the power to form, govern, and, through the ministers they should appoint, perpetuate the Church. *As my Father hath sent me, so send I you*, is his commission; and as the author of the epistle to the Hebrews calls our Lord *an Apostle*, so our Lord designates them as *his Apostles*, that is, legates or ambassadors. Four of them had been with him from the beginning; the brothers Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael, and probably the sons of Zebedee, James and John, whom he entitled sons of thunder. Levi was, as we have read, called afterwards from the receipt of custom. Thomas, James the son of Alphæus, and Judas his brother, Simon, and Judas, afterwards the traitor, were now appointed to complete the number, chosen apparently in order to show, that it was God's design, through their ministry, to gather into his fold his ancient people; and their Lord foretold that they *shall sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*. After the distinction between Jew and Gentile was done away, the eleven, with Matthias whom they had taken into their number to supply the place of the traitor, proclaimed salvation, in Christ's name, to all who would accept it; but an extraordinary Apostle, himself also a Jew, and appointed not *by men nor through man*, but directly by Jesus from heaven, was the principal agent in the conversion of the

Gentiles. The twelve are arranged in pairs, probably because they were afterwards sent out two and two. The arrangement is not exactly the same in the three gospels; for Matthew modestly puts his own name after that of his associate Thomas, and retains his opprobrious designation *Publican*, which the other Evangelists omit. Peter, who is at the head of the three lists, took the lead after the Resurrection, and opened the kingdom of heaven both to Jew and Gentile; but it ought to be manifest to all, that he was never appointed Governor of the Church, and Vicar of Christ, who has expressly declared their equality, saying, *one is your Master, and all ye are brethren*^b. Peter, James, and John, however, were most in his confidence. All were Galileans, and it is observable that several were relations, and others personal friends; thus we have the brothers Andrew and Peter, the two sons of Zebedee, and the sons of Alphæus, who is supposed to be the same person as the Cleophas of St. John, these being only two modes of grecianizing a hebrew word. He was the husband of a Mary, who with Mary Magdalene stood near the cross, and afterwards on the first day of the week came with her at sun rise to the sepulchre with sweet spices. The four former were partners as fishermen; and these, with Philip and Bartholomew, if he be the same as Nathanael, were natives of the same town, Bethsaida. Four, and, if we may depend upon this tradition, five, were originally disciples of the Baptist, and therefore prepared to follow Jesus, whom their master announced as the Lamb of God. The testimony borne to Nathanael by Jesus, shows him worthy of this distinction; and the little we know of his history renders it probable; for the other disciples of John who believed on Christ were made Apostles: he was one of the party fishing, to whom Jesus appeared after the Resurrection; he is not spoken of to supply the place of the

^b Matt. xxiii. 8.

traitor; and in the three lists, Bartholomew is paired with Philip, the friend of Nathanael; and as the former, son of Ptolemy, is only an appellation, it may well account for his having the latter as his specific name. Andrew was converted before Peter, whom he brought to Jesus; but the latter is perhaps named first, because the elder; and this may be the reason of James being placed before John. Thomas appears to have been a fisherman, and his name in his own language, or as translated Didymus, marks him as a twin. James and Jude, both writers of epistles, were, as the sons of Alphæus, first cousins of our Lord; and this relationship might be the reason why the Apostles appointed the former to preside over the Church of Jerusalem. James is called the Less, perhaps because younger than his namesake, the son of Zebedee, like whom he suffered martyrdom. Jude or Thaddæus is surnamed Lebbæus by Matthew, to distinguish him from the future traitor, who bears the title of Iscariot, it is thought, from a small town where he was born. He was entrusted by our Lord with what property he possessed, and at the Last Supper must have reclined very near to him; from which we infer, that he was more in his confidence than the rest, with the exception of Peter, James, and John. Simon, who was the brother of James and Jude, that he may not be confounded with Peter, has the epithet Canaanite, which Luke interprets a zealot; a word used originally in a good sense, but which afterwards, from the conduct of those who bore it, came to mean a bigotted and intolerant supporter of Judaism, and one who did not scruple even to assassinate those whom he regarded as God's enemies. All, we cannot doubt, faithfully fulfilled their ministry, till it was terminated by martyrdom or natural death; but, with the exception of Peter, James, and John, Scripture records little of them, and ecclesiastical history gives us slight and doubtful accounts of their subsequent labours.

Our Saviour was a constant attendant on public worship, both in the temple, and in synagogues; and instances of his private devotion are recorded; for in this, as in other acts of duty, his precepts are confirmed by the living law of his own practice. The night before the appointment of the Apostles he passed in solitude, in fervent prayer; and thereby taught us, that, previous to undertaking any important work, we should solicit the blessing and direction of our heavenly Father.

36. *The Sermon on the Mount.* Matt. v. vi. vii. Luke vi.
17—49.

Jesus had previously discoursed in the synagogues; but now, probably, no building could have contained the multitude which his miraculous cures drew around him; and therefore he ascended an eminence, sitting down, as was the custom of the teachers of that age and country. From its locality this discourse has received the name of the Sermon on the mount. We have a similar though much shorter one in Luke's gospel, spoken on a plain. This difference, which is not material, may be reconciled, by assuming, that, after curing the sick below, Jesus, in order to be better heard, removed to a rising ground. Several of the sentences contained in both may have been repeatedly uttered: but the variations are so few, that I regard them as two copies of the same discourse. Thus both commence with beatitudes, and conclude with the same simile; there is scarcely any additional matter in St. Luke's; and the omissions, in his abridged report, of the false glosses and hypocrisy of the Pharisees, are explained from his writing more especially for the use of Gentiles. Each Evangelist relates, that after the discourse Jesus came into Capernaum, and healed a centurion's servant; and the cure was attended with circumstances, which can hardly have happened twice, especially in the same little town. Luke retains only four of the

eight beatitudes, addressed to the poor, the hungry, those who weep, and those who are hated and reviled; and these, we learn from Matthew's fuller report, must be taken for the poor in spirit, for those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, and those that are persecuted for the sake of righteousness and of Christ. He also contrasts them with four woes, not recorded by Matthew. His order is preferred, because Matthew seems to have anticipated the time, that he might give near the opening of his gospel a specimen of his Master's teaching. But whether we place it before or after the appointment of the Twelve, I conceive that there is no reason to restrict the application of the Sermon to them at that time, or to the ministers of religion at any future one.

I have thought it desirable, notwithstanding its length, to insert the Sermon, and give it, with a few variations, in the translation of Bishop Jebb, and exhibit it according to his parallelisms, which, in my opinion, heighten its force, and bring into light the hidden beauty of the composition.

Happy the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

Happy the mourners; for they shall be comforted.

Happy the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Happy they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Happy the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Happy the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Happy the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.

Happy they who have been persecuted on account of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

Happy are ye when they shall revile you and persecute, And on my account shall speak all evil, falsifying.

Rejoice and exult,

*For your reward is great in the heavens ;
For so they persecuted the prophets before you.
Ye are the salt of the earth ;
But if the salt have become insipid, wherewith shall it be
salted ?*

*It is no longer good for any thing, except to be cast out,
And trodden under by men.*

Ye are the light of the world.

*A city cannot be hidden, lying on a mountain :
Nor do they light a lamp, and place it under a bushel,
But upon the stand ; and it shineth to all in the house.*

*So let your light shine before men,
That they may see your good works,
And glorify your Father in the heavens.*

*Think not I am come to annul the Law or the Prophets ;
I am not come to annul, but to fulfil.*

*For verily I say unto you,
Till heaven and earth pass away,
One point or one tittle shall not drop
From the law, till all things be accomplished.*

*Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least com-
mandments, and shall so teach men,
He shall be called least in the kingdom of the heavens.
But whosoever shall do and teach them,
The same shall be called great in the kingdom of the
heavens.*

*For I tell you,
That except your righteousness abound
More than that of the Scribes and Pharisees,
Ye shall not enter into the kingdom of the heavens.
Ye have heard that it was said to the ancients,
Thou shalt not kill :
And whoever shall kill,
Shall be liable to judgment.
But I tell you,*

*Whoever is angry with his brother without cause,
Shall be liable to judgment.*

*And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca,
Shall be liable to the council.*

*And whosoever shall say to his brother, Moreh,
Shall be liable to hell-fire.*

*If therefore thou bring thy gift to the altar,
And there remember that thy brother hath aught against thee,
Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go,
First reconcile to thyself thy brother,
And then come and offer thy gift.*

*Agree with thine adversary quickly
While thou art in the way with him,
Lest the adversary deliver thee to the judge,
And the judge deliver thee to the officer,
And thou be cast into prison.*

*Verily I tell thee,
Thou shalt not come out thence,
Till thou hast paid the last farthing.
Ye have heard that it was said to the ancients,
Ye shall not commit adultery.*

*But I tell you,
That whosoever looketh on a woman to desire her,
Hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

*But if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble,
Pluck it out, and cast it from thee;
For it is expedient for thee that one of thy members perish,
And that thy whole body be not cast into hell.*

*And if thy right hand cause thee to stumble,
Cut it off, and cast it from thee;
For it is expedient for thee that one of thy members perish,
And that thy whole body be not cast into hell.*

*It hath been said,
Whoever will divorce his wife,
Let him give her a bill of divorce:*

*But I tell you,
Whoever shall divorce his wife,
Except on account of fornication,
Maketh her commit adultery :
And whoever marrieth the divorced woman,
Committeth adultery.
Again, ye have heard that it was said to the ancients,
Thou shalt not forswear thyself,
But shalt perform to the Lord thine oaths :
But I tell you,
Swear not at all ;
Neither by heaven,
For it is the seat of God :
Nor by the earth,
For it is the footstool of his feet :
Nor by Jerusalem,
For it is the city of the great King.
Nor shalt thou swear by thy head,
For thou canst not make one hair white or black.
But let your word be, yea, yea ; nay, nay :
For whatever exceedeth these is from the evil one.
Ye have heard that it hath been said,
An eye for an eye,
And a tooth for a tooth :
But I tell you,
Resist not the wicked person :
But whosoever shall slap thee on the right cheek,
Turn to him even the other.
And to him that shall sue thee for thy coat,
Give up also thy cloak.
And whoever shall impress thee for a mile,
Go with him two.
To him who asketh of thee, give ;
And him that would borrow from thee, turn not away.
Ye have heard that it hath been said,*

*Thou shalt love thy neighbour,
And hate thine enemy.
But I tell you,
Love your enemies,
Bless them who curse you,
Do good to them who hate you,
And pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute
you ;
That ye may be the sons of your Father in the heavens :
For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good,
And raineth on the just and on the unjust.
For if ye love them who love you, what reward have you ?
Do not even the publicans the same ?
And if ye salute only your brethren, how do ye excel ?
Do not even the heathen do so ?
Ye shall therefore be perfect,
As your Father who is in the heavens is perfect.
Take heed that you do not your alms
Before men, that ye may be observed by them :
Otherwise you have no reward
From your Father in the heavens.
When therefore thou givest alms,
Sound not a trumpet before thee,
As the hypocrites do,
In the synagogues and in the streets,
That they may be praised by men.
Verily I tell you, they have their reward.
But when thou givest alms,
Let not thy left hand know
What thy right hand doeth ;
That thine alms may be in secret ;
And thy Father who seeth in secret
Himself will reward thee openly.
And when thou prayest,
Thou shalt not be as the hypocrites,*

*Who love in the synagogues,
And in the corners of the streets,
To stand praying,
That they may appear so to men.
Verily I tell you, they have their reward.
But thou, when thou prayest,
Enter into thy closet,
And having fastened the door,
Pray to thy Father in secret :
And thy Father, who seeth in secret,
Will reward thee openly.
But when ye pray, repeat not your petitions like the heathen,
For they think they shall be heard for much speaking.
Be not therefore like unto them :
For your Father knoweth of what you have need,
Before ye ask him.
After this manner, therefore, pray :
Our Father, who art in the heavens,
Hallowed be thy name.
May thy reign come.
May thy will be done,
As in heaven, so upon the earth.
Our sufficient bread
Give us this day.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And bring us not into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For if ye forgive men their transgressions,
Your Father in the heavens will also forgive you.
But if ye forgive not men their transgressions,
Neither will your Father in the heavens forgive you your
transgressions.
And when ye fast,
Be not, like hypocrites, of a gloomy countenance :*

*For they disfigure their faces,
That they may appear to men as fasting.
Verily I tell you, they have their reward.
But do thou, when fasting, anoint thy head,
And wash thy face,
That thou mayest not appear to men to fast,
But to thy Father, who is in secret ;
And thy Father, who is in secret,
Will reward thee openly.
Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth,
Where moth and rust disfigure,
And where thieves dig through and steal :
But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,
Where neither moth nor rust disfigure,
And where thieves neither dig through nor steal :
For wherever your treasure is,
There will also be your heart.
The lamp of the body is the eye :
If therefore thine eye be sound,
Thy whole body will be enlightened.
But if thine eye be distempered,
Thy whole body will be dark.
If then the light that is in thee be darkness,
How great is the darkness !
No one is able to serve two masters :
For either he will hate the one, and love the other ;
Or he will adhere to the one, and neglect the other.
Ye are not able to serve God and mammon.
Therefore I tell you,
Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat,
Nor for your body, wherewith ye shall be clothed.
Is not life more than food,
And the body than clothing ?
Look at the birds of heaven,
For they neither sow nor reap,*

*Nor do they gather into barns ;
And your heavenly Father feedeth them.
Are not ye very superior to them ?
Who of you by anxiety is able to add
To his stature one cubit ?
And why are ye anxious about clothing ?
Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ;
They toil not, nor spin :
And I tell you,
That not even Solomon in all his glory
Was arrayed like one of these.
If then the grass of the field,
Which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven,
God so clothe,
Will he not much more you, O ye distrustful ?
Be not therefore anxious, saying,
What shall we eat ? or, what shall we drink ? or, where-
with shall we be clothed ?
For all these things do the Gentiles seek :
For your Father in the heavens knoweth
That ye have need of all these.
But seek first the kingdom of God,
And all these shall be added to you.
Be not therefore anxious about the morrow,
For the morrow will be anxious about its own concerns.
Let its own care suffice for the day.
Judge not, that ye be not judged.
For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged :
And with what measure ye measure, it shall be measured
to you.
And why beholdest thou the mote in thy brother's eye,
But perceivest not the beam in thine own eye ?
Hypocrite ! take first the beam out of thine own eye,
And then thou wilt see clearly to take the mote out of thy
brother's eye.*

*Give not holy (food) to dogs,
Nor cast your pearls before swine,
Lest these trample them under foot,
And [these] turn round and tear you.
Ask, and it will be given to you ;
Seek, and ye will find ;
Knock, and it will be opened to you.
For every one who asketh receiveth,
And he that seeketh findeth,
And to him that knocketh it will be opened.
For what man is there among you,
Who if his son ask for a loaf,
Will give him a stone ?
Or if he ask for a fish,
Will give him a serpent ?
If ye then, being evil,
Know how to give good gifts to your children,
How much more will your Father in the heavens
Give good things to those who ask him ?
Whatsoever things therefore ye would that men should do
unto you,
So do ye also unto them,
For this is the Law and the Prophets.
Enter in through the narrow gate ;
For wide is the gate, and broad the road, which leadeth to
destruction,
And there are many who go through it.
For narrow is the gate, and intricate the road, which
leadeth to life,
And there are few who find it.
Beware of false teachers,
Who come to you in the clothing of sheep,
But inwardly they are ravening wolves.
By their fruits ye shall thoroughly know them.
Do men gather the grape from thorns,*

Or figs from thistles ?
So every good tree produceth good fruit ;
But the unsound tree produceth bad fruit.
A good tree is not able to produce bad fruit,
Nor an unsound tree to produce good fruit.
Every tree not producing good fruit
Is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
Certainly by their fruits ye shall recognise them.
Whosoever therefore heareth these my words, and doeth them,
I will liken him to a prudent man,
Who built his house upon the rock ;
And the rain descended,
And the floods came,
And the winds blew,
And fell upon that house,
And it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock.
And every one hearing these my words, and not doing them,
Shall be likened to a fool,
Who built his house upon the sand ;
And the rain descended,
And the floods came,
And the winds blew,
And struck upon that house,
And it fell : and the fall of it was great.

Strange as it may seem, there have been critics who have found fault with this heavenly doctrine. "To resist no injury, to take no care for the morrow," says Lord Bolingbroke, "seem fit enough for a religious sect, like the Essenians; but reason and experience both show, that, considered as general duties, they are impracticable, inconsistent with natural instinct as well as law, and quite destructive of society." Such remarks may be natural in the mouth of a sceptic, but there are even Christians, to whom Christ's precepts are hard sayings; and instead of endeavouring to

raise their conduct to his perfect standard, they either lower that standard to their own inclinations, or ingeniously argue, that it does not apply to our times. Some Roman Catholics resolve them into councils of perfection, not designed for ordinary believers; while there are Protestant divines, whose religion forbids their acquiescing in this distinction, who, like Clarke and Tillotson, inform us, that "this discourse was not intended for a general and standing rule to all Christians, but only designed for his immediate disciples, to take *them* off from all care about the things of this life, that they might attend upon his person, and wholly give themselves up to that work to which he had called them." James Blair, an early American Divine of our Church, combats this exposition, "as an odd and dangerous opinion, and as opening a great gap," as if there were any part of this Sermon not binding upon all private Christians as such. Justly does he maintain, that, throughout, pastors were not instructed in opposition to laymen, nor the Twelve in opposition to other disciples, but the followers of Christ in opposition to heathens, hypocrites, scribes, and pharisees. The context proves that he is in the right; for the word *disciples* includes, not merely his constant followers, but all who for a season attended on his teaching; and we know, that the people were also within hearing, for they are said *to have been astonished*. His apostles then, and the clergy now, may be, above their brethren, *the light of the world*, and the *salt of the earth*; but all Christians, though under no ordination engagement, are bound by their baptismal vow to preach the Gospel, by the example of a Christian life; being, like the Jews of old, as St. Peter tells us, *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, who should show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light*°. That Apostle, who was present at this Sermon, takes it not

° 1 Pet. ii. 9.

exclusively to the Twelve; but in the same spirit in which it was there said, *Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*, writes to all, *As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy*^d. There are some believers now, who require, as much as the Apostles then, to be taught the lesson of reliance upon Providence for the morrow's food and clothing, and many who much more need the warning not to lay up treasure upon earth. The same maxims too are reproduced by the Apostles, when writing to the whole congregation: thus St. James^e is as strong against swearing as his Master; and St. Paul reproaches the Corinthians^f for not suffering wrong, instead of going to law. The popular opinion therefore may be adopted as a true one, that this Sermon is addressed to all Christians, of all times, subject only to such limitations as right reason, under the guidance of religion, will, in each case, easily point out; and this I think will be allowed by every candid person, who reflects, that if these precepts be impracticable in their full extent, it is only on account of the wickedness of mankind. Even in the present state of society, the practice of some of the most self-denying will be found by experience to have *the promise of the life that now is*, as well as of *that which is to come*, and is therefore recommended by prudence as well as by benevolence. In proportion as the Christian spirit prevails, these precepts will become easier; and if that spirit were universal and perfect, there would be no opportunity at all of performing the hardest^g, since there would be no offences to forgive, and no injuries to bear.

Many are surprised that this discourse, the longest specimen we have of our Lord's teaching, should contain so little of the peculiar doctrines of Revelation; and the fact has been perverted by those who would wish Christianity to be considered as nothing more than a purer and more compre-

^d 1 Pet. i. 15.^e James v. 12.^f 1 Cor. vi. 7.^g Archbishop Newcome on our Lord's Conduct.

hensive system of morality, and forget, that though Christ be our Instructor and Example, this inestimable benefit is but a subordinate one, and that the object for which he came into the world was to be the propitiatory Victim, offered as a sacrifice for our sins. It should be remembered, that perfect obedience to the Divine will, that is, the consecration of all the faculties of man as instruments of righteousness to the glory and service of the Giver, is the ultimate end which Revelation professes; and that it is our Saviour's grand design in this discourse to rectify the popular lax interpretations of the moral Law, and to bring his hearers back to the true standard, the Word of God rightly understood. He declared, that he requires a righteousness exceeding that of the strictest observers of it in his time; whereby he, by anticipation, guards believers from an Antinomian abuse of Christian liberty, and by preaching the law in all its spirituality, as extending beyond overt acts to the desires, strips believers of every plea of self-righteousness, and convincing them of their inability to keep, in their own strength, *commandments so exceeding broad*, draws them to *the throne of grace* to solicit pardon for the past, and assistance for the future. Such is the proneness of fallen man to be satisfied with himself, that, like the young man in the Gospel, if he has led a regular and decent life, he is inclined to say of God's commandments, and with sincerity, *all these have I kept from my youth up*. As St. Paul expresses it, he was *alive without the Law once*; but when that is laid open to him in its whole extent and spirituality, and with the awful threatening denounced against the least breach of it, he perceives that he is a condemned sinner, and feeling that he has no merit to plead, throws himself unreservedly upon God's mercy. The Law faithfully expounded drives him to the Gospel for refuge from just condemnation; and then the Gospel sends him back to the Law with a desire, and in a degree the power, of keeping it, not in the vain hope of

earning salvation, but to show forth his gratitude to God, who hath pardoned and accepted him, convinced him that *it is holy, just, and good*, and has *written it on his heart*.

“It is argued by some expositors, that this sermon contains all things needful for salvation; but most certainly the unchangeable God never meant to recommend one part of his revealed will, by disparaging another. And who have ever unreservedly and cordially endeavoured to obey these sayings, except they who have firmly believed the doctrines of the Gospel? This sermon, doubtless, contains the grand outlines of Christian practice, but Christian doctrines must be learned from the other parts of the sacred oracles^h.” It should ever be borne in mind, that our Saviour differs from all other teachers of his religion in this particular, that he came into the world to *act*; and that his actions, that is, his dying for our sins and his rising again for our justification, are the subject of Christian preaching. These doctrines he could not bring out so prominently, as it is the duty of his ministers to do. His enemies would not have suffered it, and his disciples could not bear them, till their minds had been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, that gift which, on his ascension, he obtained for men. Still he was not silent on these points. There are, even in the earlier Gospels, continual allusions to them; and St. John, who wrote to supply former omissions, has many discourses, in which the divinity of Christ, and the doctrines of justification, and sanctification through his death, though not copiously explained or so earnestly enforced as in the Epistles, are yet revealed by himself to *those who have ears to hear*.

In the surrounding multitude there might be a few who followed, from hunger and thirst after righteousness; but the majority were attracted by the wealth and honours, which they conceived that he, as the Messiah, was about to bestow. The great majority of mankind have ever placed happiness in

^h Scott's Commentary.

the gratification of the senses, the more enlightened few have come nearer the truth by substituting for it intellectual enjoyment; but it was reserved for our great Teacher to show, that it is only to be found in the proper direction and regulation of the affections. Happiness is the “end and aim” of all men, though they pursue it by various roads: it was natural, therefore, that it should be the grand subject of discussion in the Grecian schools of philosophy; and our Lord, to correct the mistaken notions of mankind, opened this discourse with declaring what persons are really happy, contrasting, though without an express comparison, the children of this world and the children of God. He pronounced, *Blessed, or rather happy, the poor in spirit, mourners, the meek, they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, peace-makers, and those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.* To each he assigned the appropriate recompense. *The meek shall inherit the earth.* This had been announced before by the Psalmist, and can hardly be understood literally; the others are of necessity reserved for a future state, for there only can men *see God*, or enjoy the kingdom of heaven. Yet these rewards may be partially possessed here, for here in a degree shall those who *hunger and thirst after righteousness, be satisfied*, and the *merciful receive mercy.* These Beatitudes have been called the Christian paradoxes, for they place happiness in a disposition of mind, in which the natural man would never seek it, yet in which alone it will be found. Though pronounced as detached aphorisms, we are not to suppose that these qualities can exist apart; they will all meet, though in different proportions, in the same individual, and together form the Christian character. “There are,” says Paley¹, “two opposite characters under which mankind may generally be classed: the one possesses vigour, firmness, resolution; is daring and active, quick in its sensibilities,

¹ Evidences; part ii. chap. 2. On the Morality of the Gospel.

jealous of its fame, eager in its attachments, inflexible in its purpose, violent in its resentments. The other, meek, yielding, complying, forgiving; not prompt to act, but willing to suffer; silent and gentle under rudeness and insult, suing for reconciliation where others would demand satisfaction. The former of these characters has ever been admired by the world; the latter, which it despises as abject and poor spirited, is the subject of our Saviour's commendation." Our Lord had concluded his Beatitudes with that of those who were reviled and persecuted for righteousness' sake; but as those who embraced his doctrines might shrink from opposition to the world, or wish to withdraw from its temptations, he proceeded to declare, that they must live for the benefit of others as well as for themselves, and illustrated their duty by comparing them to salt and light. The former, which preserves meat from corruption, was used, as emblematical of purity, in every sacrifice^k; but if it *lost its savour*^l, it was *good for nothing*, not even for manure, but was *cast out*. This comparison warns them to retain their faith for their own sake, as well as that of others. That of light teaches them, that as a lamp is made for giving light, they must not hide it, but place it on a stand, that is, show forth their good works, not for ostentation, but that others may, by seeing them, *glorify their Father which is in heaven*.

Many imagined that the Messiah was to abrogate the Law; he therefore solemnly declared, that it is of eternal obligation, even in the minutest particulars, and that he came not to *destroy but to fulfil* it. As the substance of its shadows, the real Victim which its sacrifices only prefigured, he fulfilled the Ceremonial Law, and by fulfilling abolished it; but here he was speaking of the Moral Law, which he fulfilled, as the subject of it, by perfect obedience, and as a legislator, by reenacting it in its original purity, and by teaching men

^k Mark ix. 49.

^l Maundrell, in his Travels, mentions a rock of salt which had become tasteless on its surface.

to observe it, not according to the current corrupt interpretations of the Scribes, but in its spirituality, which, though so imperfectly understood, had been designed from its promulgation. He first figuratively declared, that *not one iota nor one tittle*, that is, not the least of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet, or the minute variation as distinguished between two nearly alike, that is, in plain language, none of its commandments considered as least, should *pass from the Law*, but should be kept and taught in the kingdom of heaven; and that none should enter it, whose morality did not excel that of their present teachers, the best of whom lowered its standard by limiting it to overt acts. This he illustrated by an exposition of some of the prohibitions of the Decalogue, showing, that they include the desires from which sins originate; as the sixth commandment, hatred; the seventh, lust. Knowing that the desire, unchecked and indulged, will, when opportunity favours, break out into sin; nay, is sin already, in his eyes, who can look into the heart, and judges of men not only by what they do, but by what they wish, he went at once to the source of the evil, and in highly figurative language declared, that we must pluck out the eye of concupiscence, and cut off the hand that would commit violence, if we cannot turn aside the one, or restrain the other. The sixth commandment was explained by the Scribes, so as to prohibit only actual murder, and that chiefly on account of the judgment which awaited it as a capital offence; but our Interpreter of the Law extended it to unjustifiable anger, which generates hatred; for *he that hateth his brother, is in heart a murderer*; and he divides it into three heads, 1. as existing within; 2. as it breaks forth into words of derision and contempt, such as *Raca*, or worthless wretch; and 3. into charging men with extreme infatuation, and rebellion against God, by calling them *Fools*^m, that is, apostates, or

^m *Raca* seems to require in the next clause a word in the same

rebels. These offenders he declared shall be punished hereafter, in proportion to their guilt, their sentence rising in gradation, from 1. that of a local judgment, 2. to that of the great council, 3. ending with that of fire, called after that kept burning for consuming the filth of the town in Gehenna, that is, the valley of Hinnom, which was the emblem of hell. To the commandment thus enlarged and fortified, he attached collateral duties, the appeasing the wrath of a brother who has reason to be angry, and a speedy settlement in a lawsuit with the plaintiff who has justice on his side. Religious worship, both before and since, has been often made a substitute for moral duties; but our Lord here teaches, that God will not accept it from one who has not previously sought forgiveness from any whom he has injured. The seventh commandment he combined with the tenth, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife*, and restricted divorce to the case of adultery. In explaining the third, he condemned the casuistry, which, by ingenious distinctions, maintained, that only some vows were obligatory, and excused the performance of others, showing, that an oath by Heaven, or by Earth, or by Jerusalem, was in reality an oath by their great King, and that one by their head, as they could not make a hair black or white, was indirectly an appeal to the Lord of the creation, as an oath by any part of it was equivalent to an oath by Him. He added, *Swear not at all*, a command which not only the Friends, but some of the Fathers, conceive admits of no limitation. The context, however, shows, that Jesus was speaking of promissory oaths, and of ordinary discourse; for it appears, that the swearers whom he reproved thought, that by an ingenious choice of words they could nullify their apparent obligations.

language; and all I think must approve of the conjecture, that the *Fool* of our version, is not the Greek *Moros*, but the Hebrew *Moreh*, *Rebel*, in which term Moses (Numb. xxi. 10.) reproached the Israelites, when *he spake unadvisedly with his lips*. (Ps. cvi. 33.)

Swearing, or a solemn appeal to Him who alone is a discerner of the heart on occasions of sufficient solemnity, was even commanded under the Jewish Dispensation; and nothing which it enjoins, even when circumstances do not render it binding, can be immoral. The connection in the Lawⁿ between serving, fearing, cleaving to the Lord, and swearing by his name, is remarkable. The promise in Jeremiah^o is very striking, as marking the practice not only as peculiar to God's people, but as also drawing down his blessing. And prophecy, not confining itself to the Jewish Dispensation, comprehends the brightest days of the Church, saying, that he who sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth^p; and even God himself is introduced by the prophets and by the Apostle as justifying it by his own practice^q; and the latter, referring to it with a direct reference to its value, dilates on the condescending compassion of confirming a promise by an oath, that Christians might have a strong consolation. The affirmatory oaths of courts of justice are approved in the Epistle to the Hebrews^r, as *the end of all strife*, and were sanctioned by our Lord's own example on his trial. It may be added, that the Ten Commandments are generally allowed to be of universal and perpetual obligation; and if so, as the third is designed to be a preservative from perjury, the act which is so protected must be understood to be of equal duration. In this as in other cases, what has at first sight the show of superior virtue, may be shown to be on the contrary injurious to it. An appeal to God has been instituted by him for the good of society, and powerfully tends to maintain in the world a sense of his awful power, and to keep those who would tyrannize over their fellow-creatures in order. Retaliation had been permitted by the Law, and it was extended by the Scribes to private life. This Jesus not merely repealed,

ⁿ Deut. vi. 13. x. 20.^o Jerem. xii. 16.^p Is. lxv. 16.^q Heb. vi. 16.^r Heb. vi. 16.

but he commanded his followers to submit cheerfully and readily to injustice, and never to refuse to give or to lend. He subjoined, *Ye have heard that it has been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.* The latter was the false gloss of their traditionists. This he not only forbade, but commanded them to bless, pray for, love, and do them good, and in this respect to be perfect as their heavenly Father, who causes his sun to rise alike upon the evil and the good, and rains upon the just and unjust; a comparison which shows that the love required includes the performance of acts of ordinary kindness. Those whose conduct comes not up to this standard, he considers as no better than publicans and sinners.

The religion of the Pharisees was deficient not only in its rule, but also in its motives. Jesus therefore proceeded to warn his disciples against ostentation, and seeking the praise of men, in almsgiving, and in private prayer, and fasting. He condemned those also who deceive themselves by their vain repetitions, repeating continually as the heathen did (and still do) for a length of time, the very same petitions and the very same titles of their gods, thinking *that they shall be heard for their much speaking*; and then recited as a pattern, both of the form and matter of their addresses to their Father that is in heaven, the Prayer which in consequence we call the Lord's, which he seems to have repeated on a subsequent occasion. It is short, because he whom we address knows what we need before we ask him; and prayer, though a necessary condition of our receiving, is not required for the information of him *who seeth in secret*. We solicit forgiveness, on condition of our forgiving; and not only does our Lord teach this in the prayer, but immediately after affirms that it is indispensable. He warned them not to set their affections on earthly treasure, which is in its nature liable to decay, or of which they may be forcibly deprived; and declares, that it is impossible to unite the

service of God with devotion to wealth, which, by a personification, no doubt familiar to them, (said to be derived from the Syrian title of a heathen god,) he calls *Mammon*, which means that on which men place their reliance. He cut off one chief motive for seeking wealth, by forbidding solicitude for the future, and reproved them for not trusting implicitly in their heavenly Father, who, if he clothe with more than royal splendour the perishable flowers of the field, and provide food for the birds who *gather not into barns*, will much more supply the necessary wants of his children. He who made them, knoweth what they require, therefore they have no need to wish to extend^a their lives, since the wish would be useless; and their very existence is itself an earnest, that what he hath made he will preserve: their aim therefore should be to obey him, seeking *first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*, leaving without anxiety their maintenance to his providential care.

Admonitions follow against the common sin of overlooking our own enormous offences, while we are curiously seeking after the minute faults of our neighbours; and to prudent discretion communicating religious truth. They are given in figures, which appear to us exaggerated, but were familiar to the Jews; the first calls a man's own offence a *beam* in his eye, his brother's small one a *straw*^t. The second discriminates between those on whom truth, like a pearl cast to swine, will be only thrown away; and others, who re-

^a *Who by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?* A. T. ought in the opinion of the best commentators to be translated *one cubit to his life*. The Greek *ἡλικία* is sometimes used in this meaning, and here the context, and the word cubit which is far from being a small addition to a man's height, seems to require it.

^t This, which appears to me a better translation than *splinter*, was, I apprehend, intended by the authors of our version; for *mote*, generally taken for one of those atoms that "people the sunbeam," is an obsolete synonym for straw, as may be seen in Minshew's *Guide to Tongues*, London, 1617.

semble dogs, whom the holy food of sacrifices will exasperate to persecution. Knowing the weakness of our faith, he assures us here as in other places, in the most forcible manner, that persevering prayer will be effectual. Ask, Seek, Knock, are three degrees of importunity; the asker shall receive, the seeker find, to him who knocks, the door will be opened. And this assurance, that God is a *hearer of prayer*, comes from *him* who, as his son, best knows his disposition. In the same figurative language, he encouraged earnest prayer to our perfect Father which is in heaven, from this very title with which he permits us to address the Ruler of heaven and earth; arguing, that if an human father, so imperfect and comparatively evil, will not give his son, who asks him for bread, a stone, (which cannot feed him,) or for a fish, a serpent, (that will hurt him,) how much more will God give *to them that ask him good things* for time and also for eternity, (as Luke leads us to interpret it, by substituting *Holy Spirit* for *good things*.) Our Lord concluded his practical precepts with a comprehensive maxim, which purifies self-love, by making it the measure of our benevolence. *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them*. This has been called, and with reason, the golden rule, for it is a guide to conversation and action on all occasions, and of universal application. *This*, he added, *is the Law and the Prophets*; that is, the summary of their teaching with respect to our duty to man. It may be collected from them, and as soon as it is stated, recommends itself to our judgment and our feelings. Still it was reserved for Christ to reveal it, since though preceding moralists had approximated to it, none had announced it as an affirmative proposition^u. Life is then compared to a

^u Gibbon sneeringly observes, that he had read this precept in the address of Isocrates to Nichomachus, written centuries before our Lord's birth; but it is remarkable, that his maxim, which is found also in Tobit, (iv. 15.) "Do not to others what would provoke you to

journey. The *wide gate* and *broad* and frequented *road that leadeth to destruction*, are contrasted with the *strait gate* and *narrow path* of genuine religion. And not only is it narrow, and beset with thorns and briars; there are treacherous guides, who decoy the travellers out of the right course; and it is easier for them to mislead the inconsiderate, because, though *ravening wolves* in disposition, they would assume *sheep's clothing*. However, the unholy tendency of their doctrine will sooner or later detect them, for he added, as a tree is known to be good or bad by its fruit, so will they be in time made manifest. In conclusion, he solemnly declared the unprofitableness of profession without practice. Even the Ministers of his religion, who have prophesied, that is, taught and performed miracles in his name, will be rejected by him in the judgment day, if they have been workers of iniquity. And this equally applies to those who, since the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit have ceased, have, according to their natural ability improved by study, expounded the gospel. Private believers are also comprehended in this sentence. Finally, he contrasted the end of him who is a hearer, with him who is a doer of his will, by the impressive parable of two men, who built houses of similar appearance; but one fell in the stormy season, being erected on a shifting sand; the other defied floods and rain and wind, because it rested on the sure foundation of the rock.

The morality commanded in this discourse, excelling so much that of the Scribes and Pharisees, both in extent and motives, and such, indeed, as had never been heard from the lips of any other teacher, might well produce astonishment in his audience. But the manner astonished them still more than the matter, because, as Matthew informs us, he taught *not as the scribes, but as one who had authority*. "*It was said* anger if done to yourself," is negative, and far from being equivalent to this saying of our Lord.

by the ancients," and, "*This is the exposition,*" were the phrases used by the Scribes; but Jesus, assuming the office not of the Interpreter, but of the Enacter of the Law, introduced his teaching with, *I tell you*; and the solemn admonitions, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear—Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*—show his consciousness of the high office with which he was invested. This manner in any other would have been arrogant and absurd; but it became him, whose doctrine was not his own, but *that of him who sent him*, and who proved by his works that men might depend upon the veracity of his words. He then justly claims authority, yet in many instances he condescends to state the reasons of his commands: he may therefore require us to trust him, when he does not see fit to assign them.

37. *The cure of a centurion's servant, at the request of his master.* Matt. viii. 5—13. Luke vii. 1—10.

The most eminent instances of faith, for they drew forth our Lord's admiration, were exhibited by Gentiles—a centurion, and a woman of Canaan. A centurion was a Roman officer, commanding, as his name signifies, a hundred men. His pay was only double that of a common soldier; this centurion therefore must have had property of his own. That nation in general despised the Jews too much to condescend to inquire into their religion; and when our Saviour asked Pilate why he called him the King of the Jews, the Governor in his answer, *Am I a Jew*, seemed to convey the impression that he thought a knowledge of it unbecoming his dignity. Even the philosophic Tacitus gives us strange and fabulous notices both of their worship and of their history; though he might have acquired correct information, since he lived at the same time as Josephus, and in the same city. Still he, probably, truly represents the Jews as hating other nations, who hated or despised them. This centurion

was an honourable exception. He loved the Jews, and it must have been on account of their religion, for he had been at the expense of building the Synagogue at Capernaum; and we may presume that he had renounced the idolatry in which he had been bred, and worshipped the God of Israel. Matthew describes him as coming to entreat Jesus to cure his dying servant; Luke, as conveying the petition first through the elders, and then through other friends; for I agree with the majority of harmonists, that there was but one such centurion; and we have a similar instance in the request of the sons of Zebedee, made, according to one Evangelist, by their mother; according to another, by themselves. Probably the centurion first sent, and finding that Jesus was on the way, hastened to meet him. Deeply affected by this act of condescension, he regarded his house, the habitation of a Gentile, as unfit for so holy a person to enter. Full of faith, and calling to mind, it may be, the cure at a distance of the son of the courtier of the same town, he added, that it was not necessary that Jesus should so demean himself, and illustrated his meaning from his own subordinate rank and power in the army. He was only an inferior officer, subject to his tribune's authority; yet the company of soldiers under him were prompt to execute his orders, and his servant implicitly obeyed him. Jesus then, who was not under authority, but had the command of the heavenly host, had only to send his order to the disease by one of these, and it would quit the sufferer as readily as if it were spoken on the spot. Such is the inference, not expressed, but which the reader is left to draw, by an idiom not uncommon among the ancients, of which we have other instances in the New Testament. To reward this faith, which realized so high and just a notion of the Messiah, unknown at that time even to his Apostles, the servant was healed instantly; and our Lord took occasion to observe, that many of the Gentiles from distant parts of the earth would be

admitted hereafter into the presence of Abraham, when his children after the flesh, cast into the darkness without, would mourn, and gnash their teeth from vexation and envy at their exclusion from the banquet, which they imagined was to be provided exclusively for themselves. The Jews, while miracles of every kind were daily wrought by him, were asking for a sign, whereas the centurion was fearful of betraying the least distrust in his power. He declared his belief, that he could cure at a distance as well as near, and acknowledged his own unworthiness. This lowliness of mind is the more praiseworthy, because the Romans were a proud and imperious people, and had not even a word in their language that precisely answers to our humility. The centurion, however, possessed this virtue, which predisposes the mind to listen to the evidences of Christianity, and to relish its humbling doctrines; and his attachment to his servant places his disposition in honourable contrast with most of his countrymen, who treated their slaves with a severity, which the laws of no modern nation would allow, torturing them, and even putting them to death, for trivial offences. It is remarkable, that this is not the only centurion whose praise is in the Gospel. A second, the just and devout Cornelius, was selected to be the first-fruits of the Gentile harvest^x; a third, Julius^y, preserved the life of Paul; and it was a centurion who declared of the dying Jesus, deserted by his friends and rejected by his people, that truly he was the Son of God.

38. *The son of a widow of Nain is raised from the dead.*

Luke vii. 11—16.

This miracle was succeeded by one more amazing, the restoration to life of a young man, whom Jesus met, as it were, by accident, carried out to the grave, as he was about to enter Nain, a town mentioned on no other occasion, which

^x Acts x.

^y Acts xxvii.

he visited probably for this purpose. The miracle, the first of the kind he wrought, made a great impression on the inhabitants, who acknowledged that *God had visited his people*, and that Jesus was the Prophet that should come into the world, meaning thereby the Messiah. Nor was the impression limited to the town, for the act extended his fame even beyond the holy land. The deceased was an only son, and his mother was a widow, and compassion for one so desolate, whose misery is so pathetically though briefly stated, appears to have been the sole motive of our compassionate Redeemer, who so often showed that he was touched by sympathy with the feelings of human nature. Neither the mother nor any present solicited or expected this gracious interference, for they could have no conception that the hour was come, when his words should be literally fulfilled, *the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live*. The multitude of spectators must have been very great, for *much people* came with Jesus, and *also much people of the city* attended the funeral. We read of many whom he miraculously cured of hopeless diseases, but of no more than three whom he actually restored to life, and these were in different stages of death; the daughter of Jairus had just expired, this young man lay on the bier, and Lazarus had been interred. It is observable, that the two first were only children, the last an only brother. Such were those restored by Elijah and Elisha, but how strikingly different was the manner. They earnestly prayed, Jesus commanded.

39. *John enquires if Jesus be the Messiah.* Matt. xi. 2—19.
Luke vii. 18—35.

The Baptist, having been now some time in prison, sent two of his disciples to enquire if Jesus were indeed *he that was to come*. Some commentators suppose he sent them that their doubts concerning his mission might be removed;

others, that his own faith was staggered, since Jesus took no steps to deliver him, and had not even announced himself as the Messiah; and this supposition seems to agree better with the reply, *Happy is he to whom I am not an occasion of stumbling*². Jesus did not answer in words which might have given a handle against him, but by an appeal to various miracles which he was then performing, and to the fact of his proclaiming the good tidings to the poor. This is the peculiar glory of his religion, and distinguishes him from uninspired philosophers, who communicated their opinions only to the intelligent few, while he revealed to all the truth in which all are equally interested. John had wrought no miracle, and that rendered the evidence derived from his the more decisive, especially as they had been predicted by the same prophet, who had described the Baptist's preparatory ministry. Our Lord, on their departure, turning to the Jews, bore his testimony to John, as being far more than a prophet, the Elijah that was to come, the harbinger of the Messiah. And yet, though none was greater under the old dispensation, *the least in the kingdom of heaven*, that is, the Christian of the lowest attainments, would be his superior, as favoured with more distinct views of the Gospel, and enjoying more of its privileges. He then animadverted upon the perverseness of that generation, which was alike dissatisfied with the abstemious and austere habits of John, and his social character; observing, that Wisdom, notwithstanding they found fault with both, *was justified of all her children*, the difference in their modes of life being exactly suited to the different offices assigned to each in the divine economy.

² *Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.* A. T.

40. *Jesus upbraids those who had seen his miracles without repenting, and invites the weary and heavy laden to come unto him. Matt. xi. 20—30.*

Jesus next upbraided for their unbelief Bethsaida and Chorazin, in which many of his mighty works had been done, and declared his willing acquiescence in his Father's decree, that the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven should be concealed from those who were wise and learned in their own estimation, and that of the world, and should be revealed unto persons of childlike humility and willingness to learn, whom he designates as babes. He called upon all who labour and are heavy laden to come unto him, promising that he would grant them not mere deliverance from toil, but the rest which not only puts an end to fruitless labour, but affords a reviving cordial to the wearied spirit. There is not only *peace*, but *joy in believing*; and Christianity provides a rest from the harassing anxieties felt by those whose hearts are set upon this world, a rest from the uneasiness of conscience, procured by a sense of pardoned guilt and a rest, in degree, from the power of sin. Preparatory to this invitation, he exhibited, as it were, his commission from his Father; and for the encouragement of the heavy laden sinner, who longs to come, yet may doubt his ability to fulfil his promises, declared, that all power has been delivered unto him. *To labour, and to be burthened*, distinguish the two ways of employing working animals, who either wear a yoke, or bear a burthen. The moral meaning is, that they who sin labour, and those who endure its pains and penalties as a passive sufferer are burdened. To this miserable course of action and endurance he opposes the blessed activity, and the no less blessed suffering, of the believer's life^a. The Apostle Peter^b describes the Law which God gave by Moses as a yoke which neither the Jews

^a Jebb's Sacred Literature.

^b Acts xv. 10.

of his own time nor their fathers were able to bear; and it was rendered still more oppressive by the national teachers, who, as Jesus testified on another occasion, laid *heavy burdens* of their own invention *upon men's shoulders, which they would not themselves move with one of their fingers*. In contradistinction to them, our gracious Master invites all *that labour and are heavy laden* to come unto him, whose *yoke is easy, and whose burthen is light*. He says at the same time, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*; and such as will take him for an example, will find the declaration to be true. He requires nothing but what he has himself performed, and on account of his disciples; and in the path which he hath marked out for them, they may trace his footsteps all the way. His yoke of obedience will in time be found "perfect freedom;" for he promises rest, and not only rest from unsatisfied desires and from the sense of guilt, but peace of mind; for his rest comprehends not only deliverance from toil, but refreshment.

41. *A woman who had been a sinner (erroneously supposed to be Mary Magdalene) anoints the feet of Jesus at an entertainment. Luke vii. 36—50.*

An opportunity soon offered of proving Jesus to be in the best sense, what was brought against him as an accusation, *the friend of publicans and sinners*—

"The sinner's friend, but sin's eternal foe."

He had accepted a Pharisee's invitation to dinner; and a woman who was a notorious sinner, encouraged, it may be, by his late gracious call upon all *who laboured* and were *heavy laden* to come unto him, entered while he was reclining at the meal. She stood behind, and was therefore unobserved, till her abundant penitential tears wetted his feet, which she then wiped with her flowing tresses, and anointed with an expensive ointment, once, we may presume, designed for her own person, but which now she did

not think herself worthy to pour upon his head. Simon, looking at this woman's past life, not at her present feelings, formed an unfavourable opinion of Jesus; for he concluded, judging from himself and other Pharisees, that if he were a Prophet, he must have known her character, and would not have suffered her to approach him. Jesus answered to his thoughts, for he does not seem to have expressed them, in a way that showed him to be more than a prophet, a discernor of the heart, and authorized to forgive sin. Had he directly remonstrated with the Pharisee upon his pride and his disdain of this penitent, he would have irritated and hardened him; but an indirect reproof through a parable was calculated to convince and to affect without affronting him. In the case which he put he is himself the creditor; the two debtors sinners, guilty in a very different degree, yet equally without the smallest power to satisfy his claims. It is so worded, that Simon cannot but allow that the greater debtor would have the deeper sense of obligation to the creditor who had forgiven both. Jesus having approved of the answer, proceeded to apply it, and contrasted this woman's treatment of him with his cold reception. Simon had not paid him the respect due to an ordinary guest; he had not given him the expected refreshment of water for his feet, welcomed him with the usual salutation, or anointed his head with common oil; whereas she had continually kissed his feet, had watered them with her tears, and had poured on them a fragrant and costly ointment. She had been forgiven many sins, and *therefore* she loved much. "*For* she loved much," says our translation, with which the Vulgate agrees; and certainly *ὅτι* is usually so rendered. But as it appears that this sinner's love was the *effect* and *evidence*, not the *cause*, of her forgiveness, which our Lord ascribes to faith, *therefore* must be the proper rendering; and this sense, which is supported by the most learned commentators, though uncommon, is not without authority. It likewise

best accords with the parable and our Lord's conclusion, *to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little*. This seems to have been spoken aside to Simon; for he said afterwards to the woman, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*; and when the guests were offended at his assuming this divine prerogative, he confirmed his declaration by observing, that it was her faith that had saved her. As she required no bodily cure, he must have meant the salvation of her soul.

According to tradition, this sinner was Mary of Magdala; and she became, in consequence, in the Roman Church, the personification of female penitence. As such, she is a favourite subject with their artists; and in our own country her name has been assigned to a benevolent Asylum, provided by Christian philanthropy in London for women who have deviated from chastity. Objection was made at the time of its erection to this appropriation of her name^c; and it has certainly no Scriptural warrant, for the Magdalene is only described as possessed with seven devils, which are in no other instance taken as personifications of sins; nor is there any reason to suppose, that if she had been the woman who anointed Christ's feet, the Evangelist would have concealed her name. This portion of Scripture was selected for the Gospel on St. Mary Magdalene's day, and the Collect in our original Prayer Book was composed in conformity with this tradition; but as on its revision three years later this festival was dropped, we infer that in the interval our Reformers had satisfied themselves, that this sinner had been assumed to be the Magdalene, without sufficient authority. Her very designation, Mary of Magdala, is incompatible with the text, which describes this as a person of this town which our Lord now visited, and the tradition apparently originated from her being named in the following chapter. It is still more extraordinary that the Latin Church should have confounded her with Mary, sister of Lazarus, since Christ's

^c Lardner's Letter to Jonas Hanway.

anointment by the latter plainly led to our Lord's betrayal.

42. *Jesus cures a Demoniac, and, being accused of confederacy with the Devil, declares, that all reviling is pardonable, except that of the Holy Spirit. Matt. xii. 22—37. Mark iii. 20—30. Luke viii. 2—4. xi. 14—26.*

Jesus now made another circuit of Galilee, accompanied by his Apostles, and several women, whom he had cured of diseases and of demoniacal possession. Some of them, being persons of property, defrayed his expenses; for, as he told one who offered to become his disciple, he had not only no home of his own, but was unable without a miracle even to pay the tribute money, to such a depth of poverty did it graciously please him to condescend. Three of them are named, Mary Magdalene, Susanna, and Joanna the wife of Chusa, a person of some distinction in Herod's court, conjectured to be the officer whose son was miraculously cured^d. From Mary's being first named, we infer that she was a person of at least equal rank; and it appears from this connection, and her appellation derived from her town, that she was neither the sister of Lazarus, nor the sinner who anointed the Saviour's feet. On his return to Capernaum, when the eagerness of the multitude to hear him did not give him leisure for his meals, his relations were so far from believing on him, that they wished to keep him within the house, considering him disordered in mind.

His cure of a demoniac, who was at once both blind and dumb, being an indisputable fact, while it caused the people to exclaim, *is not this the Son of David?* provoked from the Pharisees the malignant charge, that he performed miracles through a confederacy with the Devil, the prince of the

^d John iv. 46. Ἐπίτροπος, the word here used, is of wider extent than οἰκονόμος, which is also rendered steward, and more correctly, for the former may mean any kind of superintendent.

demons. This he repelled, by showing that he came to deliver men from subjection to evil spirits; and that Satan's reign must be subverted in proportion to the establishment of his own. From the fact of his ejecting demons, he demonstrated his own superiority; illustrating his assertion by the remark, that no one could break into and rob a strong man's house, unless he first overpowered and bound him; and as he came to destroy the works of the devil, the case did not admit of neutrality, but those that refused to act with him must be accounted as his enemies. He added, that every kind of sin and reviling was pardonable, except one, the reviling the Holy Ghost. It is frequently, but incorrectly, called the *sin* against the Holy Ghost; and this inaccuracy has a tendency to augment the alarm which the mention of an unpardonable offence cannot fail to excite. It is *blasphemy*, that is, reviling; and this limits it to something not done, but spoken. This awful denunciation has alarmed conscientious yet weak believers; yet taken, as all Scripture ought to be, in connection with the context, we perceive that it was primarily designed as a warning to his personal opponents, and cannot be committed by any who believe in Christ, though they may grieve, resist, and even quench the influence of the Holy Ghost, by provoking him to leave them to themselves. Hammond, Tillotson, Waterland, and other eminent divines, are of opinion, that our Lord spoke the very sin which his enemies were then in the act of committing, the ascribing his miracles to the devil; and they seem to be borne out by the authority of St. Mark, for he adds as a comment, *because they said he had an unclean spirit*. Whitby, however, gives a different paraphrase, which Scott approves. "You represent me as one who casts out devils by Beelzebub^e, and you

^e There is no proper name for the chief of the demons, who is only known to us by descriptive appellations; as Satan, meaning Enemy in old English, Fiend, the Tempter, and Devil, that is, the Accuser. The Jews, who regarded all the gods of the heathen as evil spirits, as

will still go on to represent me as a deceiver of the people ; but, notwithstanding, this grievous sin shall be forgiven, if that last dispensation of the Holy Ghost, which I shall send after my ascension, shall prevail upon you to believe in me ; but if, after sending him to testify to the truth of my mission and resurrection, you shall blaspheme him by representing him as an evil spirit, your sin shall never be pardoned." The two senses nearly coincide, and the guilt seems to differ only in degree, the second being an obstinate and wilful perseverance in the first, after additional proof of the falsity

appears from this and other passages in the Gospels, transferred to him the title of Beelzebub, which they sometimes in contempt altered into Belzebul, Lord of dung, from the same feeling that led them to change the name of the Samaritan town Sychem into Sychar. Beelzebub means, the Lord Fly, or Lord of Flies, a strange designation, as it seems to us, of a god ; yet in a hot country the abundance of them is a plague ; and we know, that even in the milder climate of Greece, Jupiter was invoked as *Ἀπόμυιος*, the Driver away of flies. But Dr. Hales endeavours to show, that it is no ordinary fly, but the Tzirah, (the hornet of our version,) which drove out before Israel the two kings of the Amorites. (Joshua xxiv. 12.) As Zebul is in the singular number, it is probable that the allusion is to this tremendous insect, which seems not to have been indigenous in Canaan ; for Isaiah (vii. 18.) says, that *the Lord will hiss for it from the rivers of Egypt*. It was through the maddening sting of this fly, called by Æschylus, *Οἷστρος*, by Virgil, (G. iii.) Asilus, that Io, transformed into a heifer, was driven by a divine scourge from land to land ; and the testimony of Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, proves, that the descriptions of the poets is scarcely exaggerated. "As soon," says he, "as their buzzing is heard, the cattle forsake their food, and run wildly about the plain till they die, worn out with fatigue, fright, and hunger."

Asper, acerba sonans ; quo tota exterrita silvis
Diffugiunt armenta.

This god, who appears, as thus represented, far more formidable than according to the common notion of him, was worshipped at Ekron, and was consulted by king Ahaziah, (2 Kings i.) in preference to the God of Israel.

of the accusation. Upon either supposition, the persons thus solemnly admonished were eyewitnesses of facts, which they themselves allowed to be miracles; they were also works, not only of superhuman power, but of benevolence; and he who will not recognise in them their real author, but deliberately ascribes them to diabolical agency, seems to have sinned beyond the reach of forgiveness, since he insults and reviles the only Being who can bring his mind into such a frame as to be a fit object of mercy. Miracles which are exhibited to the senses of one generation are received by subsequent ones on testimony; and modern infidels do not ascribe them to an evil spirit, but call in question their reality. The difference, therefore, of guilt in the two cases is not in degree but in kind; the one being the offence of the understanding, the other of the heart; still, if the rejected stone, become the head of the corner, shall grind the latter to powder, the former who falls upon it will be broken. Whether or not the most offensive form of modern disbelief, which reviles the moral character of our immaculate Redeemer, and would, if it could, crush his religion, may come under this tremendous condemnation, must be left for his decision, who knoweth the secrets of the heart, and can alone appreciate the temptations of individuals, and their means of ascertaining the truth. Some we know have been reclaimed from the lowest depths of infidelity; and we may be sure, that none, however deep his guilt hath been, who believes and repents, can have committed this unpardonable offence; for genuine repentance and faith are inseparably connected with forgiveness, and being themselves the gift of God, would never be bestowed on those he had determined not to pardon. They who fear they may have committed this sin, cannot have been guilty; while those (if we may presume to form an opinion of their probable future lot) who seem to approach it, are fearless, and well satisfied with their conduct, promising

themselves, if they believe in another life, an eternity of happiness. Our Lord added, that though this species of slander is alone unpardonable, none can be practised with impunity, for an account must be given at the day of judgment, not only of wicked actions, but of every *wicked* speech. The word is ἄγρον, “idle word,” which by a common euphemism is put for *pernicious* or *injurious*: and for this meaning, which is confirmed by the various reading πονηρὸν, we have the decisive authority of the classics and of the Greek fathers. This suits the context better than trifling and light conversation, which, if not noticed here, is condemned by St. Paul under the terms εὐτραπέλεια, *jesting*, that is, equivocal language, and μωρολογία, *foolish talking*^f.

43. *The Scribes and Pharisees are reproved for requiring a sign from heaven. Matt. xii. 38—45. Luke xi. 24—26; 29—32.*

The Pharisees, intimating thereby that the miracles they were in the habit of seeing were not satisfactory, as they might be performed through collusion with the devil, demanded of Jesus a sign from heaven, meaning, it should seem, that he should appear with the angels in the clouds, according to Daniel’s prophecy^g, and establish as Messiah the universal monarchy of his people. He answered, that the demand showed them to be a wicked and adulterous race, who had degenerated from the faith of their father Abraham, and that no sign would be given to them, except that of Jonah, (authenticating thereby a history that has been often disbelieved and ridiculed^h,) which he declared to be

^f Eph. v. 4.

^g Daniel vii. 13.

^h It has been maintained by the great body of commentators, that Jonah was deposited in the stomach of a large fish; and as the throat of a whale is too narrow to admit the passage of a man, they have assumed it to be a shark; but in avoiding one difficulty they make another, for a man could not pass through a shark’s formidable ranges of teeth, nor indeed exist in the stomach of any fish, without a series

typical of the period of his own remaining in the grave. They required him to show himself as a Sovereign; but that "coming in glorious majesty" was reserved for a distant age; his own was only to have the sign of his "coming in great humility." He affirmed, that past generations, who availed themselves of less favourable opportunities, would rise up to condemn them who were unaffected by a preacher of repentance more impressive than Jonah, and uninstructed by a teacher wiser than Solomon; and he concluded with the parable of an evil spirit, who left a man for a season, but, finding his mind empty and ready for his return, came back with seven others more wicked than himself, and thus rendered the condition of the possessed worse than it was before. So, he expressly added, it shall be to this wicked generation, pointing out their national danger, and indicating that the temporary conviction wrought by the Baptist's preaching having died away, and their evil passions reviving with fresh strength, they would become seven times more hardened, and would incur the guilt of wilful presumptuous sin. This sign, his resurrection, was the great evidence of his mission, and the commencement of his reign, but it did not come, as they expected, *with observation*. The parable is a prophecy of the rejection of the Jews, and of their awful state of enmity to the Gospel, which still

of miracles. But a safe asylum was afforded in another *cavity*, *κοιλία*, of the whale, in which Jonas might have been preserved; not indeed without a miracle, but with that economy of miracles so frequently exemplified in Scripture. "At the bottom of the throat is an intestine so large and wide, that *a man might pass into it*; it is an air vessel, in which are two vents, which serve for inspiration and expiration, and enable the animal to rise or sink at pleasure." And this testimony of a naturalist is of the more weight, as he had not the case of Jonas in view. *Bomare. Dictionnaire d'Histoire Naturelle*. For this remark I am indebted to Bishop Jebb's interesting volume on "Sacred Literature."

continues. It is also applicable to such individuals, as, in the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews¹, *sin wilfully after they have received the knowledge of the truth, for whom there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.*

44, 45. *Jesus declares who are the blessed. Matt. xii. 47—50.*

Luke xi. 27, 28.

The perseverance of Jesus in teaching the people, notwithstanding the opposition of the pharisees, gave disquietude to his near relations, who wished him to desist, supposing that he exceeded the bounds of reason; and they seem to have persuaded his Mother to concur in the design. Aware of their intention, he answered by enquiring who were his mother and his brethren; alluding, it may be, to his higher nature, and certainly implying that they had no right from their relationship to direct or control his ministry. *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* was his reproof to his Virgin Mother, when at the wedding-feast she interfered before the time that he knew to be the fit one for the performance of his first miracle; and now both in words and by a significant action, he declared that his attachment to his genuine disciples exceeds his natural affection to his family. He assured those who were standing round him, and through them his faithful followers of every age, that *she* is equal in his estimation to a mother, who performs his Father's will; and a little before, a woman out of the crowd, having in admiration exclaimed, *Happy she that bare thee!* he replied, to the same purport, that they rather should be called happy, *who hear the word of God, and keep it.* The virgin's name occurs in the Gospels more rarely than even the Protestant might expect, and this reserve must astonish the Roman Catholic, who raises her, to say the least, to equality with her Son. We who know the excess, in some instances

¹ Hebrews x. 26.

idolatrous, in all reprehensible and unchristian, to which the reverence which is her due has been carried, cannot fail to be struck that so little is recorded of her, and that the tendency of that little is clearly, and we may reasonably suppose intentionally, a prophetic warning, to lower our estimation of her. Still, as she herself exclaimed, *all generations will esteem her happy*, as the Mother of our Lord; and we are naturally apt to consider the privilege of being his mother, or even sister, or brother, after the flesh, as enviable. How gratifying then is the assurance, and how should it stimulate us to make every effort to appropriate to ourselves the blessing, that the very state we would have coveted, had we been his contemporaries, may even now be ours; and that we may be, nay, that we shall be, if we really keep his word, his near kinsmen, his brethren; and being brethren, the sons and joint-heirs of his Father.

46. *Jesus, being at dinner in a Pharisee's house, denounces woes against the hypocritical Pharisees, Scribes, and Lawyers. Luke xi. 37—54.*

Jesus, being at dinner with a Pharisee, who had assembled many of his brethren, perhaps with the hope of ensnaring him in conversation, his host expressed surprise at his not having washed on entering, according to the tradition; and so gave him an opportunity of boldly and sharply reproving their superstition and hypocrisy. He pointed out the absurdity of their scrupulous attention to outward washing, while their hearts were *full of ravening and wickedness*, and declared that they would be more effectually cleansed by alms than by ablutions. He added, that while they fulfilled the minutest injunctions of the Law, as paying the tithe of garden herbs, they neglected its weightiest moral precepts, and so became a snare to the ignorant. He observed, that they affected to honour the dead Prophets, and blamed their forefathers for putting them to death;

yet, as in their behaviour to him they imitated their conduct, the monuments they erected seemed raised less out of respect to the murdered than to their murderers; and he concluded with declaring, that the *Divine Wisdom*, that is, he himself, (as appears from the parallel passage^k,) would send them prophets and apostles, whom they would in like manner persecute and destroy, so that the punishment of their own sins, and those of their forefathers, would fall upon them. The dreadful vengeance inflicted by the Romans upon the nation was not more than their own wickedness, in crucifying the Lord of Life, had deserved; yet it was so signal and complete, that, humanly speaking, it would seem an adequate punishment for all the murders of the righteous, from that of Abel, the first who had been slain, to Zachariah, who perished between the sanctuary and the altar^l. It is remarkable, that Josephus^m, speaking of his countrymen, declares, in the strongest terms, that there never had been so wicked a race; and that if the Romans had delayed coming, God would have interfered to destroy them, since they were worse than the people of Sodom. Jesus denounced woe also to the Lawyers, one of whom drew the attack upon them, for imposing upon the people burdens which they would not themselves *touch with one* of their fingers, and would neither enter themselves, or suffer others to enter, into the kingdom of Heaven.

^k Matt. xxiii. 34.

^l Zechariah the Prophet, the son of Barakiah, according to some, though the manner of his death is not recorded in the Bible. Others therefore suppose the Zechariah intended was the son of the High Priest Jehoida, who was stoned on the spot named by our Lord, by command of King Joash, who owed his own life to his father; and this seems the more probable, because as Abel is the first righteous person, so this is the last, whose murder is related in the Old Testament; and it seems less likely that Jesus should refer to an event not mentioned in history, than that the name of Barakiah should have been substituted for that of Jehoida.

^m Wars, v. 13.

47. *He teaches the people. Luke xii. 1—21.*

Our Lord's reproof exasperated the company, who endeavoured to provoke him to say something that might afford them matter of accusation; but instead of continuing the conversation, he left the house, and in the presence of the people assembled, as it were, in tens of thousands, warned his disciples against hypocrisy, the leaven which corrupted the religion of the Pharisees. He encouraged them, by the endearing appellation of friends, not to fear those who at the worst can but kill the body, and suggested the fear of God as the only principle that can emancipate them from the fear of man. The imputation of this tormenting and abasing passion, really more ensnaring and more injurious than others of a more positive character, is rejected as a mortal offence by the men of this world, who, while rejecting it, prove themselves to be its slaves. It is commonly regarded with indulgence, as the venial infirmity of an amiable character, but such judgment is not ratified by Scripture; for, *when he that overcometh shall inherit all things, not only shall the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, but the fearful too, have their part in the fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* And let any who are staggered by this as a *hard saying*, consider how often such a crime as murder may be traced to cowardice, and how much evil is winked at from want of moral courage. In some form or other it is apt to beset us all, but it will be subdued in time by those whose faith can appropriate the following assurances, that even *the hairs of their head are numbered*, that we are of *more value than many sparrows*, and that *whoever acknowledges the Son of Man before men, shall be acknowledged by him before the angels.* His discourse was interrupted by a man out of the crowd, asking him to desire his brother to divide with him an inheritance. This he declined, according to his custom,

not to interfere in secular concerns; but he availed himself of the application to caution them against covetousness; and he showed its absurdity by the parable of a rich man suddenly called into eternity, while deliberately planning the increase of his wealth, and the means of its enjoyment. He is rightly called in the original ἀφρων, inconsiderate, or thoughtless, for he not only selfishly anticipates a long possession of his property, when, as the event shows, he has not a day to live, but atheistically reckons upon a continuance of life, as if it depended upon natural causes; and the providence and will of God have no place in his calculations. Jesus warned the multitude not to imitate this unwise worldly schemer, but to make a prudent use of their temporal goods by giving alms, and so securing a treasure in heaven that will not fail. He then foretold, that his religion would not introduce upon earth the peace they expected, but division; and he charged the people to judge for themselves what is right, and to accept in time his offer of mercy, like the prisoner, who, if he is prudent, will satisfy his adversary, before he is brought before the judge.

48. *He cautions them against forming rash judgments.*

Luke xii. 1—9.

Pilate had lately ordered some Galileans to be slain while in the act of sacrificing. This was represented to Jesus as a judgment; and he himself told them of eighteen persons, probably Jews, who had been killed by the fall of a tower of the city. Such events are regarded by some as Accidents, by others as Judgments. The former opinion cannot be entertained by any who on the word of their Master believe that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without the Divine permission; and his answer forbids our interpreting them as the latter. He taught them, instead of drawing such unprofitable conclusions from the calamities of others,

to look to their own conduct, lest the same should befall them; and the word *likewise* is emphatic; for literally, in such manner, did many afterwards perish during the siege. He then illustrated God's forbearance in still affording to his undeserving people a respite for reformation, by the simile of a gardener requesting and obtaining another year's trial for a barren figtree, which though it had the advantage of being planted in a vineyard, produced nothing but leaves; not only *cumbering*, that is, uselessly occupying, the ground, but rendering it unproductive. The additional year may mean the period during which, after his Ascension, the Holy Spirit would still strive with them through his Apostles; and this may be considered as extending to the whole period that preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. The figtree represents the nation, from which he had for three years sought in vain fruits meet for repentance; but this has, like many other parables, a secondary sense, and warns of their danger all who in any age continue unfruitful under the means of grace.

49. *He teaches in parables.* *Matt.* xiii. 1—53. *Mark* iv. 1—34. *Luke* viii. 4—18.

Jesus, finding the multitude pressing upon him, withdrew with his Apostles into a boat, from which he could continue his instructions without being incommoded. This day's teaching is recorded more fully than on any other occasion, except when he delivered the Sermon on the Mount; and this discourse differs from that, in consisting entirely of parables, a mode of teaching which the malice of his enemies now rendered expedient. It is recorded with variations by the first three Evangelists, but at the greatest length by Matthew. The parables are eight; of which four, the Sower, the Tares, the Mustard-seed, and the Leaven, were addressed to the multitude, the rest to the disciples when explaining the former. Mark however observes, that with

many such parables he spake the word unto them; we therefore take these only as a specimen; and so many being here brought together, this seems to be the proper place to offer some general remarks upon

PARABLES.

The Hebrewⁿ *Mashal*, figurative speech, is rendered in the Septuagint by Παροιμία, and Παραβολή; the former used only by St. John, the latter by the other Evangelists. The etymology of both leads to the idea of comparison, but *Parable* includes Maxims, the Γνώμαι of the Greeks, even when not expressed in figurative language, as many of those of Solomon; and also such sayings as, *Physician, heal thyself*; and, *If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch*; which we call *Proverbs*, and are, in fact, condensed Parables. The *Parable* differs from the *Fable*, by never passing beyond the bounds of reality; whereas it is of the essence of the latter to assign to irrational and inanimate beings, as animals and plants, the feelings and language of man. Fable seems to be beneath the dignity of an inspired Teacher, who has no need to alter the course of nature, but can draw instruction from things as they are. Our Lord's parables assume not only possible but probable events; and are taken generally from such as are continually occurring; as husbandmen sowing seed, fishermen dragging a net, the hiring of labourers, and the ceremonies of a wedding. All have really happened, and even those which to the ignorant are extraordinary, become to them credible, as they advance in the knowledge of history and of foreign customs. Thus, the parable of a nobleman travelling to a far country to obtain sovereignty, had been realized both in Herod and in his son

ⁿ In this edition I have improved this general view of parables, by introducing some valuable observations from Mr. Trench's learned and instructive work on the subject.

Archelaus: the sowing the seed of a pernicious plant in a neighbouring field is an act of malice well known in India^o; and Annas the high priest paid the workmen employed about the Temple a whole day's pay, though they worked but a single hour^p. The objection to parables is their obscurity, but it applies to very few of our Lord's, and the different explanations of commentators chiefly arise from their inattention to the remarks with which they are introduced or concluded. The object of some he has himself revealed, and two, the Sower and the Tares, which he minutely interpreted, afford us a key to unlock the meaning of others. The chief difficulty is to ascertain how far the circumstances are significant. Some commentators give a special meaning to all, and carry their system to an extreme, which is fanciful, and sometimes absurd. Others regard them as mere embellishments; yet if a natural and suitable meaning can be discovered in them, it gives additional beauty, and our Lord's interpretation, which descends to particulars, encourages the attempt. Calvin, I think, errs on the one side, when he allows no meaning to the oil of the Virgins' vessels; and those, on the other, who find one in the three loaves. A parable conveys, under a figure, an important *moral*, as the duty of forgiveness in that of the unmerciful servant, and in that of the pearl of great price, the value of the Gospel. But from the fathers down to the present day, interpreters, not satisfied with this, seek for a *mystical* meaning; and this they have sometimes brought out with a piety and eloquence that fascinate and mislead the judgment. But, on reflection, this allegorising, however well meant or edifying, will appear objectionable, from its tendency to draw us from the real moral to another, which, after all, may exist only in the fancy of the interpreter, as we have no means of ascertaining the truth of the most specious; and even in these, as in that of the Samaritan, there is

^a Roberts's Oriental Illustrations, 541.

^p Josephus, Ant. ix. 7.

generally wanting a harmony in the details, which renders it questionable. We have also contradictory interpretations. It is safer, therefore, to take the mystical meaning as no more than an uninspired author's pious accommodation. Others attempt to show, that each has a prophetic allusion to the history of the Church; and we must allow, that the Redeemer's death, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the ultimate triumph of Christianity, are foretold in them. Yet when commentators come down to later ages, they only prove their own partiality to the form of Christianity which they profess, since parables may be as easily accommodated to an opposite one. Thus Vitranga finds in the goodly pearl, the Church of Geneva; though no characteristics are given, which might enable us to judge of the propriety of his application. In the same spirit he makes the Pope the unmerciful servant; but this most unhappy assumption recoils upon himself, since it amounts to a virtual acknowledgment that he is the rightful governor of the Church. These conclusions, drawn by the prejudices of a divine, who has justly earned a distinguished name from his elaborate Commentary on Isaiah, are sufficient, without specifying others, to deter us from speculations, which show more fancy than judgment, and which when called in question cannot be proved. The fathers complained, that the Gnostics endeavoured to derive countenance to their errors from this source: the parable of the Marriage Feast has by later divines been pressed into the cause of persecution; and that of the Samaritan originated the doctrine of supererogation. We should therefore regard them not as teaching new tenets, but as illustrating old ones, and cite them in support of none that are not set forth in plain terms in other parts of Scripture.

A second hidden meaning is indispensable, for a parable is a species of *Simile*. This definition will exclude several, as the Rich Fool, the Samaritan, and the Pharisee and Pub-

lican, which do not, like the Sower, teach us as figures, but are themselves examples. Such narratives might be real, but some of them could be only told by him who knows what others guess, as the Pharisee's prayer; and that of Lazarus, which takes us into the world of spirits.

Our Lord's enemies would have turned a positive declaration of his dignity to his premature destruction, but they could not lay hold of parables, though their meaning might be as clear; such as those which show him to be the Messiah, and his opponents to be the enemies of God; and those which upbraid them with their pride and stubbornness, and foretel the admission of the heathen into the Church, and their own rejection. Before, as in the Sermon on the Mount, he had taught without a figure; but the behaviour of the Pharisees that very morning proved the necessity of his guarding against their enmity; and the people, who were much under their influence, were as yet unable to bear the whole undisguised truth. In private he expounded these parables to his disciples, and gradually prepared them for the plainness of speech which they were themselves to use. But though this precaution was often necessary, he still was in the habit of teaching in this manner, when his situation did not require it; for it has been always attractive in the East, and the Talmud shows that its popularity continued after his time. To persons of uncultivated minds, that is, to the great majority, who feel strongly but cannot reason accurately, argumentative instruction is dry and forbidding, while that which is communicated through the imagination pleases, and attaches itself to the memory. The obscurity in which it is involved excites curiosity; and the trouble it costs to elicit the meaning enhances its value. It gains an easier admission into both head and heart than direct precept: it strikes deeper, and the impression remains longer. It also insinuates reproof with less offence, and often with greater efficacy, than open rebuke; and truths, imperfectly

seen through this thin veil, will be endured, which, without any covering, would irritate the hearer, and might be dangerous to the speaker; as is strikingly illustrated in the Old Testament by Nathan's parable to David. Even our Lord's ordinary speech may be said to be parabolical, for he generally conveyed instruction in figures, drawn from the objects before him. Thus, upon curing a blind man, he styled himself *the Light of the world*, beholding the fowls of the air, he led his disciples to infer, that the Providence of God, which takes care of these his inferior creatures, will not neglect his children: and the sight of the money-changers, suggested the exhortation to his disciples to lay out their several talents to the best advantage; while among the sheep-folds he showed himself to be the true Shepherd of souls. At a feast he brought master and guests to the consideration of a better entertainment, to which they were all invited; and from meat and drink, which support the body, he taught them to consider the benefit their souls will derive from bread and wine, as symbols of his offering himself as a sacrifice. Thus he improved every thing into an useful moral, and made the objects which we are continually seeing, and the occupations in which we are constantly engaged, a perpetual memorial of his lessons; so that we may find "God in the garden and in the fields," though exhibited "more clearly in his book." His parables, properly so called, are confined to the first three gospels; for that of St. John substitutes for them *Allegories*.

The parables delivered this day were prophetical, as well as explanatory. The first predicts the different reception of the Gospel by different classes of men; the second, the corruption of it imperceptibly introduced by the devil, which will continue to the end of this dispensation. The third and fourth foretel the gradual extension of Christianity in the world; the fifth, its unobserved yet effectual progress in the heart of the believer; the sixth and seventh mark the

estimate which true Christians will form of it ; and the last shows the nature of the Church, which includes not only the genuine servants of Christ, but also those mere professors of religion, who while they call Christ Lord, by their works deny him.

The Sower is represented as sowing the same seed throughout a field, with different success, according to the nature of the soil. A fourth portion only fell into good ground, and even this varied much in fruitfulness ; for while one field yielded thirty times as much as had been sown, a second seed multiplied itself sixty fold, and a third even a hundred. A gradation is equally marked in the seed that fails ; that which fell on the hard and beaten pathway comes not up at all ; that sown on the rocky soil comes up, but soon withers away, though it looks for a while promising, lacking moisture, and having no depth of earth ; while that sown among the thorns even puts forth the ear, but does not ripen. We know from the explanation afterwards given to his disciples by the divine Author of the parable, that it designates four kinds of hearers of the gospel ; and probably we shall not press it too much in supposing that there are, generally speaking, no more. As all seed will fail sooner or later that is not sown in good ground, so it is only *in the honest and good heart* that the word of God will fructify, and yield a return ; and *the preparation of the heart is from the Lord*. The rest it doth not *profit, not being mixed with faith*. The first are the careless inattentive hearers, on whom it makes no impression, and who, though they may conform to Christianity, cannot be called, with propriety, believers. The second understand the doctrines, and appropriate to themselves the privileges, of religion, but *receive not the truth in the love of it* ; and *having no root*, though they seemed at first to flourish even more than the genuine believer, in the hour of trial they even renounce their profession. In our time, where there is no actual persecution, this class is

not so numerous as the third, who retain profession to the end, but being distracted by *the cares of this world*, or drawn aside by *the deceitfulness of riches*, are Christians only in profession.

In this parable of the Seed, the truth is snatched out of the heart, or lost through the wickedness or weakness of man. In the next, that of the Tares, we have the effect of false doctrine designedly introduced. The produce of the seed sown by Satan, *transformed into an angel of light*, is only gradually detected. Gross transgressors, either in doctrine or practice, may be known at once; and therefore this parable does not forbid their excommunication. The persons here represented as tares, are too plausible to be ascertained by human judgment; and as the governors of the Church might confound with them some real yet defective children of the kingdom, their exclusion must be left for the unerring decision of the owner of the field at the harvest, and preaches therefore forbearance towards those who err; an important lesson, which the persecutions even unto death, which disgrace ecclesiastical history, too plainly shows has often been utterly disregarded. And let us bear in mind that there is an uncharitable feeling towards dissenters, who do not err in fundamental articles that approaches to this sin. A knowledge of the plant seems necessary for understanding the parable. This zizany, though rendered tares, clearly could not be the vetch which now bears the name, which, like wheat, though of inferior value, is still deserving of cultivation, but some pernicious weed, not easily distinguished from it; and I think there can be no doubt that Jerome, who latterly resided in the Holy Land, was right in taking it for the *Lolium*, to which Virgil^a has attached the epithet *infelix*, and which in England, where it is also indigenous, is called Darnel. It grows up with wheat, from which in an early stage of its growth it

^a Georg. i. 154.

can hardly be distinguished. The bread made of corn, in which a considerable quantity of its seed is mixed, will occasion giddiness; and this quality has procured it the specific name *temulentum*, intoxicating^r. We learn from this parable, that the Church on earth will ever consist of unworthy as well as worthy members, and consequently the error of those who secede from it, in order to procure a purity not attainable even in the smallest sect. Our XXXIX Articles strongly express, that there may be even unworthy rulers and ministers in a true Church, it might be said, in every congregation, and ever has been, even when discipline was attempted to be enforced. This is a temptation to pious persons of weak judgment, who expect sinless perfection in the Church, though they have not attained it themselves. They forget that God's long-suffering, with which their hasty zeal would interfere, brings many under the means of grace who may ultimately be saved; and that though the Church is to be *without spot or blemish*, our Lord will not present it to himself in this glorious state, till he returns in his own and his Father's glory.

The following parables show, that, notwithstanding all impediments, Christianity will ultimately prevail. The description of Mustard as the greatest not only of herbs but of trees, strikes an European reader as an exaggeration; yet Scott observes in his Commentary, that even in Lincolnshire he has seen it larger than most shrubs; and, in a warmer country, a Rabbi, quoted by Whitby, talks of climbing into one as into a fig-tree. It has been suggested by Mr. Frost, that our Lord meant a species of *Phytolacca*, which is of the same natural order, and has the same properties. It is common in Palestine, and as it attains as great a height as any tree from the minutest seed, the proportion between the two would equally recommend it for a

^r Sowerby's English Botany, 1824.

comparison; still I think there is no sufficient reason for departing from our version.

The Leaven may represent the moral regenerating influence of the Gospel upon individuals as well as communities, which seems to be also the lesson meant to be conveyed by the imperceptible growth of the Seed which St. Mark substitutes for it, and which is only to be found in his gospel.

The man who accidentally discovers a buried treasure in a field, and the merchant who diligently seeking goodly pearls finds one of great price, both of whom alike willingly give in exchange all that they possess, strongly mark the preeminent value of Christianity, with this difference, that they represent two kinds of converts, the first of whom is sought by religion, and the second is active in seeking it. The Drag-net represents, under a figure as familiar to those who live on the banks of a lake, as the Field of corn intermixed with useless and even injurious grasses to the husbandman, the character of the Christian Church militant upon earth.

Our Lord, having finished these parables, and ascertained that they were understood by the apostles, concluded with a comparison relating to the Ministerial office, showing, that as the householder bringeth out of his store both old and new provisions, as the occasions of his family require; so they, and the clergy their successors, as teachers, should feed the souls of his people with the spiritual knowledge they have acquired, both from the ancient dispensation and from the new.

No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God, is probably a familiar proverb, transferred to those who take upon themselves the yoke of Christ, and especially to his Ministers. It is a warning to them not to engage in so important a work

without due deliberation; but when they have engaged, not to be diverted from it by casting a longing look behind on the pleasures and gains which they have resigned in order to promote his cause*.

50. *Jesus stills a Tempest.* Matt. viii. 18—27. Mark iv. 35—41. Luke ix. 57—62.

Jesus, without waiting to refresh himself, now again retired to the boat, probably to seek the repose which he required, and could not command on shore. On his way, he detected the insincerity of three persons, who professed, and might persuade themselves, that they were willing to become his disciples. The first made the proposal, the second was invited, the third took the invitation as addressed to him, but all were shown to be unfit. The first was deterred by a statement of the privations that must be endured in the service of one who *had not where to lay his head*; the others pleaded, as reasons for delay, the performance of domestic duties; this the funeral of a father, that the settling of his affairs, and taking leave of his family. Both are plausible excuses; but Jesus probably knew that they were no more than excuses, and he replied in a figure drawn from the daily occupation of an husbandman, which shows

* The ancient plough was little more than a crooked piece of wood; so that, unless the ploughman leant upon it, and, as it were, loaded it with his own weight, [arator nisi incurvus prævaricatur, Pliny, xviii. 19.] the share would glide over the surface without making any furrows. Hesiod's verses,

Ὅς κ' ἔργου μελετῶν ἰθεῖαν αὐτὰς ἐλαύνει
Μηκέτι παπταίνων μεθ' ὁμήλικας, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ ἔργῳ
Θυμὸν ἔχων.

*Εργα, 441. recommending, that the man who follows the plough should be attentive to his work, that he may make the furrows straight, and not look off to his associates, illustrate our Saviour's saying.

that neither then, nor now, may any personal or relative concern justifiably interfere with the obedience due to himself, which it is obvious that it would be unreasonable and immoral for a mere human teacher to require. He must not even *look back*, like Lot's wife, on the world which he has renounced, but proceed in a straightforward course with his eye fixed on the end. A Father is to be honoured, but God is to be obeyed, says Augustine; the former is to be loved, but the latter is to be preferred. It is much to be observed, that the alleged engagements upon which both these applications were founded, were in themselves strictly lawful, and even praiseworthy; and hence the lesson conveyed by these examples derives its peculiar value. Had the ground of these excuses been something sinful, the rarer and more enormous sin would have received its check; but the more frequent and seductive fault would have sheltered itself under the cover of a tacit recognition. As it is, there is no pretence for any such distinction. Not things sinful, not things indifferent, not things merely lawful, but things positively good and praiseworthy, are set forth in the searching and uncompromising law of the Gospel, as those which have a tendency to interfere with the claims of Christ upon our first and principal regard. The most favourable case is exhibited, that so the rest may be left to the operation of a plain *a fortiori* argument. If even these may not interfere with duty, how much less those? If even the worldly be excluded from the kingdom of God, how shall it fare with the wicked? The three speeches mark the difference of their characters; the first is too forward, the second too backward, the third undecided^t.

Jesus now embarked, and, while they were sailing, from fatigue fell asleep. A violent tempest arising, the disciples, though accustomed to the lake, were alarmed, and, humanly speaking, with reason, for the ship was full of water. They

^t Boys' *Tactica Sacra*.

awoke him, and addressed him, it appears, with some degree of reproof; *Master, carest thou not that we perish?* To allay their uneasiness, he immediately issued his commands to the wind and to the waves; and no sooner had he spoken, than *the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.* Considering the evidence they had repeatedly had of his power, their distrust was blameable; he therefore mildly censured them. They were amazed that even the elements yielded to his will, and said to one another, *what manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?* Thus the storm that threatened their lives was made the occasion of a blessing to their souls, by reviving and strengthening their faith. Some commentators, thinking the words, *peace, be still*, and the expression, *he rebuked*, too strong to be addressed to inanimate beings, imagine that the storm had been raised by the evil Spirit; but this is a melancholy and dangerous doctrine, interfering, it seems to me, with the omnipotence of the Deity, and not to be admitted unless unavoidable, for he also rebuked a fever; and therefore, if it be allowed in one case of physical evil, it may be applied to all, and thus unintentionally revive the Manichean heresy of a good and an evil spirit contending for the government of the world. An opinion which leads to such results, ought not to rest upon the metaphorical use of a word. In all languages, bold expressions introduced by poets cease in the course of time to be considered figurative, and are used by the least rhetorical prose authors: Ἐπετίμησε may be of this kind; and is sometimes rendered in the Vulgate *imperabat*; but indeed command, and all such words, when addressed to inanimate objects, must have been originally figurative. The vulgar are wont to ascribe to the devil works of art, which seem to them superhuman, even when like bridges they are of manifest utility; but the Deity will not, I conceive, permit this apostate creature to interfere with the material world. He has permitted him, for our probation,

from the time of our progenitors, to suggest evil thoughts and desires to the mind; but he has no power, he can only persuade, and that chiefly, it may be presumed, through the imagination, by clothing with a fascination which really possess the objects of temptation. Sometimes we are told, that *he walketh about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*, but he is more dangerous when transformed *into an angel of light*. Happily, if we resist him, whatever form he assumes, he will flee from us; and we should study to become, like the Apostle, not ignorant of his devices.

51. *He suffers the demons to enter into the herd of swine.*
Matt. viii. 28—34. Mark v. 1—20. Luke viii. 26—39.

This triumph over the elements was immediately followed by another over the spiritual world; for upon landing on the opposite shore of the Gadarenes^a, Jesus was met by two demoniacs, who had taken up their abode in the tombs which had been excavated in the mountain. These miserable outcasts of society were naked, and cut themselves with stones, and were so fierce that no one ventured to approach them, or found it possible to bind them with ropes or chains. Matthew, who was present, mentions, as well as Luke, two, but Mark only one, perhaps because he alone was properly affected by his recovery, and obeyed his benefactor. Jesus commanded the demons to quit their victims, and being questioned, they called themselves, on account of their number, Legion. The Roman regiment so called consisted of

^a Matthew calls it the country of the Gergesenes, or, according to some manuscripts, Gerasenes; and Origen decides in favour of the former, because they showed in his time the cliff near Gergesa, from which the swine were said to have rushed into the lake. Gadara and Gerasa, at both of which there are fine Roman ruins, are more distant; but the different accounts may perhaps be reconciled, by supposing the territories of these towns to be contiguous.

6000 men; and this speech, though it need not be understood literally, conveys a tremendous notion of demoniacal possession. They solicited and obtained leave to enter into a herd of swine, two thousand in number, that they might not be tormented before their time; and yet the swine rushed immediately down a precipice into the lake, where they perished, seemingly against the wishes of the demons, who could not control them, and therefore were accessory to the fate they had hoped to escape.

The swine-herds, affrighted, fled and told the miracle in the city, and the inhabitants came out to Jesus, not to implore his protection, but to intreat him to depart, viewing him with alarm as a person possessed of supernatural power, and disposed to use it to their injury. One of the dispossessed demoniacs, who used to be naked, they found in proper clothing, (provided we may suppose by the charity of the Apostles out of their own,) composed and rational, and listening to the instructions of his deliverer. He was desirous of becoming his constant attendant, but Jesus ordered him to return to his friends, and to tell them *how great things God had done for him*. So he began to publish in Decapolis what great things *Jesus* had done for him. This is a remarkable expression, since we learn from Mark that Jesus and Lord, here standing (not, as in some instances, as an ordinary term of respect to a superior, but) for Jehovah, may be used indifferently of the same Person with propriety, and manifests, if not this man's conviction, at least that of this Evangelist, who would not have employed it, if he had thought there could be any danger in honouring his Master in the highest degree. Luke substitutes God for Lord, which prevents any possible misconception. This demoniac, restored to himself, became an undeniable witness to his power and mercy in that remote corner; and was probably the means of procuring to his benefactor on his next visit a more favourable reception*. The two requests

* Mark vii. 31—37.

ought to be considered in connection, the believer's denied in wisdom, that of the ungodly granted in judgment. The keeping of swine, though not forbidden by the Law, had been prohibited a century before; and the fact of their being kept may be explained by the large Gentile population, who used its flesh for food. The swine-herds, whether Jews or Gentiles, ought to have submitted to the command, and the miracle, if duly improved, would have abundantly compensated for the pecuniary loss.

52. *Matthew's entertainment; Jesus cures a woman of an issue of blood; and restored to life the daughter of Jairus. Matt. ix. 10—26. Mark v. 21—43. Luke viii. 40—56.*

Matthew's entertainment of our Lord is placed by most harmonists after his return from the country of the Gadarenes; and though in his own gospel it immediately follows his call, his reason for connecting it with that event might be a wish to dismiss at once the mention of himself. Many of his former associates of his own profession were invited, in the hope no doubt that the same change that he had himself experienced, might be wrought in them through the edifying conversation of his Master. This scandalized the Pharisees; but Jesus vindicated himself by replying, that it was the diseased that needed a physician, and that therefore he sought out sinners that he might reform them.

The disciples of the Baptist then came to express their surprise that he and his followers did not fast, like themselves and the Pharisees. Adopting the image by which their master had described him, he replied, that it would be unseasonable for the friends of a bridegroom to fast during the days allotted for the nuptials, which were always given to festivity; but if any calamity deprived them of him, their joy would be turned into mourning, and then they would fast, as John's disciples did now. Thus he indirectly

taught, that it would be unbecoming in them to fast while they were blessed with his presence; but that when he should be taken away from them, they would meet with hardships and trials that would render fasting seasonable. He further illustrated the subject by remarking, that no one would piece an old woollen garment with new cloth, which had never been fulled or properly dressed, (*ἀγναφος*, St. Mark,) because its rough and unpliant texture, instead of supplying what was wanting, would rend it more; and that it was not usual to put new wine into old (leathern) bottles, going to decay, as the fermenting of the liquor would burst them. Thus in these occasional duties, which are no more than means of strengthening piety, discretion should be used, and a due proportion observed between a believer's knowledge and stability of character, and the self-denial required from him; otherwise hopeful persons may either be disheartened by premature demands, or be led to rest in them as meritorious. Prudence and tenderness are therefore required in recommending to new converts practices which, however useful, are not indispensable, and ought to be inculcated gradually as they are able to bear them.

As to fasting, in particular, it is a matter of notoriety, that by many Roman Catholics it is little better than nominally observed; their abstinence at the most respecting only the nature of their food, since they do not scruple on fast-days to eat freely of vegetables and fish, though they will not touch the flesh of warm-blooded animals. Among Protestants, at least among the English, although recognised as a duty in our Book of Common Prayer, it is in practice all but exploded. Its abuse by the church from which we separated, has reduced it in our estimation; and as the edification of the individual is its proper object, it may be better that the time for this duty should be chosen by himself, with a reference to his own constitution and circumstances, instead of being imposed at stated seasons by authority, except in such

rare cases as call for national and public humiliation. Private fasting, however, is taught by our Lord in a manner even more imperative than positive command; for he assumes that his disciples will fast, by instructing them how to perform the duty in an acceptable manner. And if we maintain that it is no longer binding, it will be difficult to defend the propriety of private prayer, concerning which he gives a similar caution, and only enforces in the same indirect manner. Its utility for disciplining the body, and *bringing it into subjection* to the nobler part of our nature, is generally allowed by moralists, and is expressly declared by St. Paul^v; and there is nothing in the present state of the church or of the world to justify the conclusion, that this or other acts of self-denial are no longer needed for the mortification of sin, and the sinner's progress in holiness. But as men are too apt to run from one extreme to another, from laxity to austerity, and from inordinate indulgence to *neglecting of the body*^z; they must be reminded of the same Apostle's assurance, that this is *a will worship* which has but *a show of wisdom*, and that he cautioned Timothy^a, who perhaps was beset by this temptation^b, that *bodily exercise, ἀσκησις*, asceticism, *profiteth little*. Observing the evils of excess and defects, we shall regard fasting, and similar acts of self-denial, not as earning, but qualifying us for, glory; not as our end, but as one of the means of attaining it.

Our Lord's discourse was interrupted by Jaīrus, a ruler of a synagogue, who fell at his feet, intreating him to come and heal his only daughter, a girl of twelve years old, who was dying. It was through Jewish elders, that the centurion had solicited his servant's recovery, and we may reasonably conjecture that this ruler, who now applies for himself, was one of those whom that officer had so employed. Jesus complied with his request; but on his way, a woman with an issue of blood, who had reduced herself to poverty in the

^v 1 Cor. ix. 27.

^z Col. ii. 23.

^a 1 Tim. iv. 8.

^b v. 23.

vain attempt to obtain a cure through men, who had only aggravated her disease, pressing through the crowd, touched the fringe of his mantle, and was cured. Her disease being one that was reckoned unclean, she was ashamed of naming it before the crowd; yet having formed a high though probably an erroneous conception of his dignity, she attempted to obtain from him a cure even without his knowledge, and would not pollute him by touching his person. No miraculous virtue could have gone forth from him, as she imagined, without his consent, but he spoke to bring her to a public confession, which would at once make known his power and her faith; for when on another occasion the crowd pressed upon him for the same purpose, he had not noticed it^c. She felt that she was cured, *ἔγνω τῷ σώματι*^d, and the instantaneous ceasing of an hæmorrhage, which had lasted twelve years, and baffled medical skill, was evidently miraculous. She would willingly have withdrawn unobserved, but Jesus for her sake determined, however painful it might be to her, that she should acknowledge the obligation; he therefore not only spoke, but looked around; so, trembling she fell down at his feet, and declared before the whole multitude what she had done, and how she was cured. Eusebius^e informs us, that he had himself seen before her house at Paneas, statues of herself and of the Saviour: and we learn from Sozomen^f, that the Christians removed the latter into their church, when Julian had substituted for it his own; and if this be correct, it is a proof that her false shame had been entirely subdued. Capernaum was the scene of the miracle, but she might have come for the purpose, or afterwards settled at Paneas.

This delay put the faith of Jairus to the test, for before Jesus could reach the house, intelligence was brought of his child's death. His family would have had him retire in

^c Mark iii. 10.

^d Mark v. 29.

^e Hist. vii. 18.

^f Hist. v. 21.

despair, but Jesus encouraged him with the assurance, that if he would believe, he need not fear the result. He sought, however, no unnecessary display, and therefore took with him only Peter and the sons of Zebedee, and her parents, excluding the family, and the hired mourners, who had now no business there, and whose incredulity rendered them unfit to be present. The girl was restored not only to life but to health, for she was able immediately to walk and to eat.

53. *Jesus restores sight to two blind men; 54. and speech to a dumb demoniac. Matt. ix. 27—35.*

The display of Christ's power was varied in almost every conceivable mode; but his miracles were not judgments, but works of mercy, in which respect they are contrasted with the plagues of Egypt, and indeed with the greater number of those of the former dispensation. The restoration of sight is one peculiar to himself, and is predicted by Isaiah^s as characteristic of the Messiah, for which reason, probably, so many of these obviously miraculous cures are recorded. The two blind men who met him coming out of Jairus's house, besought him as the Son of David, thereby acknowledging him as the promised Saviour; and we may presume, that they grounded their hope of his granting their petition as much upon prophecy, as upon the report of his miracles. Having already abundantly excited attention, he would not publicly grant their request; but on their following him into the house, (probably Peter's,) he there, apart, drew from them a confession of their belief in his power, and rested their cure upon its sincerity: *Be it unto you according to your faith.* As that was genuine, their eyes were opened; and yet they disobeyed his strict injunction, not to publish their recovery of sight.

The cure, immediately after, of a dumb demoniac, shows the wilful blindness and inveterate malice of the Pharisees,

^s Isaiah xlii. 7.

who, when the multitude honestly exclaimed, *it was never so seen in Israel*, returned to their charge of confederacy with the evil Spirit.

55. *He is again rejected at Nazareth. Matt. xiii. 54—58. Mark vi. 1—6.*

Jesus had commenced his ministry in Galilee, at Nazareth, where he had lived till his thirtieth year. After a series of miracles throughout the country, and after making many disciples, he now afforded the inhabitants another opportunity of acknowledging him. Once more he taught there on the sabbath; they were amazed, but his discourse, as on his former visit, fell upon ears which refused to hear; and though they did not now proceed to any act of violence, his low rank in society was a stumbling-block, which neither his wisdom nor the report of his miracles could remove. Such obstinate unbelief excited his astonishment, and no doubt his regret; for we are informed that he partook of all the feelings of the nature which he had assumed, which are compatible with perfect innocence. Their state of mind prevented his performing miracles, except in a few instances, for it prevented their bringing the diseased to him, nor would the diseased themselves have had faith to be healed.

56, 57. *He instructs and sends forth the twelve Apostles. Matt. ix. 35—38. Mark vi. 7—11. Luke ix. 1—6.*

Multitudes flocked from distant places to hear Jesus; and their forlorn condition, as stray sheep without a shepherd to guide them, (for the priests and levites did not deserve the name,) excited his compassion. He observed, that there was a plenteous harvest ripening, which would require many labourers to reap; and as they were so few, he exhorted them to pray the Lord of the harvest to increase their number. He followed out his remark, by sending forth the twelve whom he designated as Apostles, that is, his commissioned

agents, over the holy land to proclaim his approaching reign; but on this occasion he strictly limited their mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, forbidding them to visit Samaritan, as well as Gentile, cities. His authorizing them to work miracles, is justly brought forward as evidence of his divinity, It was God, not Moses, that conferred the Spirit upon the seventy appointed to assist him; and when the spirit of Elijah rested upon Elisha, the answer of the former to the request of his disciple showed that the power came not from himself, but from God. Christ alone worked miracles at will, and authorized others to perform them. The Apostles were sent out two and two; and it has been suggested, that it would be desirable that the Missionaries of our days should follow the example, as the presence of a faithful companion would sustain the spirits of a Christian preacher amid the indifference, or mockery, or disputes of aliens, and in seasons of perplexity or danger might be of the greatest service, by advice, example, and encouragement. Some of the instructions now given were only suited to the present journey, and were subsequently revoked. Thus he told them that they had been sent without provision for their journey, but hereafter they must take with them what property they had; now their mission was limited to the house of Israel, hereafter the gospel was to be preached to every creature. The warning, that, notwithstanding the power with which they were endued, and the joyful nature of their message, they would be hated by all that were not prevailed upon to receive it, and that they would even be exposed to such sufferings as would tempt them to apostatize, has been more or less verified in every age. He charged them therefore to beware of men, and to combine *prudence* with *innocence*. Still, after every justifiable precaution, they must expect no better treatment than their Master; but though they were condemned to death, they must not fear those who at the worst could but shorten life, but Him whose

power endureth for ever. They must therefore confess their Master before men, whatever it might cost, if they would have him to acknowledge them, and to reward them in heaven. Nor would his enemies only endeavour to frighten them from their duty; there would be the well-meant but really unkind opposition and the entreaty of friends to try them; but no relative or personal regards must be suffered to interfere with love to himself. He concluded his address with the encouraging assurance, that whoever entertained them would have the same recompense as if they had welcomed him; and that at any time, whoever should receive a prophet, that is, a teacher of religion, for the sake of his office, would receive the same reward as if he were a teacher himself; and even the smallest kindness, were it but a cup of cold water, rendered to a private Christian *because* he is a Christian, would not fail of a due recompense.

It is manifest, that in this and in other discourses, our Lord claims the perfect love which the Law appropriates to God; and this claim is to one who can draw conclusions and weigh consequences, as strong evidence of his Divinity as a direct affirmation. A mere man in making such a claim becomes the rival of his Creator, who *is a jealous God, and will not give his glory to another*; nor would one in his right mind presume to advance it. We should find it impossible to bring ourselves to feel the right of a human teacher, even though he died for us, to claim this supreme affection; and we must qualify and dilute his expressions, before we can bring them within the bounds of propriety, and free them from the charge of unexampled presumption. Yet the Apostles and primitive Christians felt the claim of Jesus to be just: and love to him, which is the preeminent and distinguishing feature of Christianity, becomes, upon the orthodox scheme, both natural and reasonable. "View Jesus as Emmanuel, God with us, the atoning Redeemer of a lost world, and all is as it ought to be. The contem-

plation of what he is, and of what he hath done, will dispose us, with all the ardour of a grateful heart, to join in the song of heaven: *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever*^h."

ON MISSIONS.

Our Lord's exhortation to his Apostles to pray for additional labourers, cannot in these latter days be read by the thoughtful Christian, without suggesting to his mind, that while countries, not even known at that time to any, have, in the eighteen centuries that have since elapsed, been converted to Christianity; many more still remain enveloped in the darkness and profligacy of heathenism; and those where the Apostles founded churches, have been, with few exceptions, usurped by the false prophet Mahomet. As long, therefore, as the harvest is plenteous, and the labourers comparatively few, this command continues in force; and when we consider that the harvest is the standing crop ready for the sickle, which with due diligence may be gathered in, we perceive that it is not to an hopeless undertaking that these words direct our minds. Here is an awful multitude of immortal souls in a most perilous condition, yet capable of salvation, supposing the appointed means to be used; and, according to our Lord's declaration, the difficulty does not lie in the nature of the work, but in the deficiency of workmen. He therefore points out our duty, which is, to pray to God to raise up and prosper labourers among the heathen, and to do what we can to send them forth, and to maintain them; for, where we can do any thing for the attainment of a holy object, our prayer must be such a faithful one as simply relies on God for the event, and also such an honest one as pledges us to all needful personal exertions. Labour without prayer would be unbelief; prayer without labour hypocrisy, and a

^h Wardlaw, Discourses on the Socinian Controversy, p. 52—54.

presumptuous appeal to God, instead of a pious waiting upon his Providence¹. When we consider the wonderful facilities for communicating Christianity, which the present age affords above every former one, as extended commerce, universal peace, an improved press, the increased knowledge of foreign tongues, and the wonderful discoveries of science and their application to navigation and other practical purposes, there could never have been a generation since the foundation of the Church to which this charge has spoken so loudly as to our own. The claims of nations who never heard of a Redeemer, as the Heathen, and of those who reject him, as the Moslem and the Jew, upon the philanthropy of believers, begin at length to be acknowledged; and the immense colonial empire which it has pleased Divine Providence to bestow upon our Queen, making her the Sovereign of many more millions of unbelieving than of Christian subjects, points it out as the imperative duty of Britons to take the lead in the glorious office of converting the world, while it affords us means of influence and protection, which no other nation enjoys, since our Missionaries, with few exceptions, preach to fellow subjects, and therefore, when unsuccessful, are at least safe from personal danger. While every denomination of Christians in our country is now earnestly labouring in this work of piety and love, the Established Church is zealously pursuing this grand object, by the agency of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign parts, which confines its operations to the British dominions; and of the Church Missionary Society, which has Africa, New Zealand, and the East, for its peculiar province, but has no other limits than those to which its opportunities and resources restrict it. The principle of encouraging Missions, which, strange as it may seem, though expressly commanded by the Saviour,

¹ Archdeacon Bather's Sermon before the Church Missionary Society, 1833.

has been ridiculed, and even denied, by persons who would yet be affronted if they were classed with unbelievers, has been formally recognised by our Sovereigns, who, in their capacity as Heads of the Church, have in our days issued from time to time Royal Letters, recommending the cause to every parish in England. Some scruple to contribute to the Church Missionary Society, because they object that it interferes with the more ancient one; while those who are the loudest in praising one Society at the expense of the other, are often found to confine their approbation to words, and to give nothing to the funds of the one which they recommend, as incorporated, and more under Episcopal government. Still the Church Missionary Society is supported by the Archbishops and many of their Suffragans, and the great majority of the Ministers which it sends out have received Episcopal ordination. Others think, that there are advantages arising from having more than one set of Managers, and that it would not be desirable that the two Societies, if disposed, should coalesce into one. There is at least the obvious advantage, that if we should have reason at any time to disapprove of the government of one, we have still the power of aiding the salvation of the heathen through the other. Many subscribe to the two, and they have the satisfaction of knowing, that the honour of converting 40,000 souls in the province of Tinnevely, is to be shared by these Societies; and of learning from the late Bishop of Madras, that the Missionaries of both labour there together in the spirit of love, and a sound mind. It is therefore to be hoped, that all the members of our Church will at least support one of these Societies, both of which have recently kept their jubilees, and are growing in popularity; yet with an increasing revenue are still too poor to occupy the many regions, which would thankfully receive their Missionaries. We may innocently indulge a preference for either; and we may, according to our character, take a deeper

interest in the conversion of barbarous tribes, or of such civilized heathen countries as India or China; but I cannot imagine how any who profess Christianity can care so little for the Saviour's honour, or can so set at nought his commands, as not to join his brethren in promoting through some agency the extension of his Master's empire, and to make known his saving health to the millions that are still *lying in darkness and in the shadow of death*. Some urge, that since it has been ascertained that there are hundreds of thousands in our own Christian land, who though baptized, are as ignorant of Christianity as the heathen, it is our duty to endeavour to bring them into the field, instead of attempting the conversion of aliens. The objection is specious, but untenable; for had St. Paul acted upon this principle, he would have settled for life at Corinth or Ephesus, and not after laying the foundation, leave it to his converts to complete the superstructure, while he undertook new Missions. The fact is, that Societies have sprung up for strengthening the exertions of the Clergy at home, at the very time that others were promoting the conversion of the heathen, and both are generally supported by the same individuals. Zeal to advance the Faith in the one direction, has not checked its extension in the other. Ours is a Missionary Religion; and we shall best fulfil our duty, by communicating the glad tidings of salvation to the utmost of our power, abroad as well as at home; "for so long as *Teach all nations* shall stand in holy Scripture as a commandment, it will be our duty to endeavour to fulfil it, let what will be urged against it; and so long as *Lo! I am with you always*, shall stand there as a promise, nothing but infidelity can make us think, at any time, that our labour in such undertakings can be in vain in the Lord."

58—61. *Herod, who had beheaded the Baptist, is desirous of seeing Jesus. Matt. xiv. 1—13. Mark vi. 14—32. Luke ix. 1—10.*

The fame of one who wrought miracles not only in person, but also through the agency of twelve men whom he had commissioned, could not fail to spread over the country. Some supposed him to be Elijah, and others Jeremiah, whom they expected to return to life; but the guilty conscience of the Tetrarch suggested that he must be the Baptist risen from the grave, now endowed with miraculous power. He expressed a desire to see this extraordinary Teacher, perhaps that he might imprison him; but John's disciples, having buried their master, announced his death to Jesus, that he might consult his own safety; and his time being not yet come, he withdrew (with his Apostles, who had returned from their mission) beyond the lake, to a desert near Bethsaida, within the tetrarchy of Philip. Herod had honoured the Baptist; had listened with apparent satisfaction to his discourses, and even done many things according to his advice; but on his remonstrating with him on his adulterous marriage with his niece and sister-in-law, he cast him, as has been observed, into prison at her suggestion, and was only restrained from putting him to death, by fear of a popular disturbance. His birth-day, which he celebrated with great pomp, gave Herodias the opportunity she sought of satisfying her revenge; and her plan for procuring the head of the prophet to be brought in a dish at the feast, seems to have been previously concerted with her daughter Salomé, who must have been quite young. Herod's regret for his rash promise *with an oath to give her whatsoever she should ask*, arose less, it should seem, from the desire of saving John's life, than from the fear of consequences. He had been engaged in war with his father-in-law, who resented his conduct to his former wife; and it

was probably his soldiers on their march whom the Baptist had enjoined to be content with their wages, since the word employed (*στρατευόμενοι*) implies that they were on actual service. Soon after this murder, his whole army perished through treachery; and the loss was regarded as a judgment for putting to death so excellent a man, who had taught the nation piety and righteousness¹.

62, 63. *Five thousand persons are fed miraculously by him in a desert. Matt. xiv. 15—21. Mark vi. 32—44. Luke ix. 11—17. John vi. 1—14.*

The desert was no solitude to Jesus, for crowds flocked to hear him, most likely in greater numbers because the passover was near, and they might intend to accompany him to Jerusalem. Compassion induced him to feed the whole multitude, amounting, without including women and children, to five thousand; and this he did with five barley-loaves and two small fishes, which a lad happened to have with him. These he multiplied in such abundance, that they not only satisfied those who were famishing from hunger, but what was left much exceeded the original quantity, as to fill twelve baskets. Previous to the distribution, he set the example of returning thanks for the meal. In the result was fulfilled that declaration of Scripture, *he that watereth, shall be watered also himself*. The disciples found that they were no losers by parting with their loaves and fishes; they had when they began but one loaf for each thousand men, yet after all were fed, the twelve had a basket apiece. Jesus, however, before he acted, determined, as upon other occasions, to put his disciples to the proof, and therefore addressed himself to Philip, who had formerly described him to Nathanael as him of *whom Moses and the Prophets did write*. But though that declaration seemed so promising, and Philip had since seen so many miracles, he could not now recognise the

¹ Joseph. Ant. xviii.

Father in the Son, but only thought of purchasing, and named two hundred denarii, seemingly a greater sum than they possessed, as barely sufficient to buy a little food for them all. The only course that suggested itself to the Apostles was to dismiss his hearers to the neighbouring villages, to provide for themselves. It is strange that they did not, recollecting how Elijah and Elisha had wrought a similar miracle, though on a smaller scale, anticipate his meaning. In computing the number fed, the Evangelists do not speak by guess, for the disposition of the people in squares of a determinate length, enabled them to calculate with certainty. Jesus did not think it beneath him to order his disciples to gather up the fragments. This was a convincing proof that there could have been no delusion; but the reason he gives, *that nothing be lost*, is eminently deserving of our attention; for as by feeding these thousands he sets us an example of liberality, so by this speech he teaches us, that frugality and charity should be united. Constitutional liberality borders upon prodigality, but Christian charity will be directed by the example and the precepts of Christ; and since *he to whom the earth and the fulness thereof belongs*, is not lavishly wasteful of his property; so we, to whom he assigns only a portion of it as a trust, should be careful to expend our share in such a manner, as that in the due appropriation of it *nothing may be lost*. The effect of this miracle was peculiar; for it alone drew from any considerable assembly of Jews belief in him as the Messiah. Its resemblance to the feeding of their fathers in the wilderness *by bread from heaven*, seems to have led them to the conclusion, that he must be the Prophet like unto himself, whom Moses had taught them to expect. They consequently wished to force him to assume his office, being satisfied, from his ability to feed thousands in the desert, that every obstacle must give way before him; and conceiving too that he would not be un-

willing to be constrained to declare his Sovereignty. So important in its consequences was this miracle, that it is the only one recorded by all the Evangelists; and the last shows the supplementary character of his gospel, by adding what is more important to us, the Discourse which it occasioned.

64. *Jesus walks on the lake.* *Matt.* xiv. 22—33. *Mark* vi. 45—53. *John* vi. 15—21.

As the Apostles might be disposed to concur in the design, Jesus constrained them to embark without him; and then dismissing the crowd, instead of resting, withdrew to a mountain to pray. He had no sins to confess, and no wants to state; but knowing the future, he had as it were in his sight the temptations that awaited him, and the work he had to accomplish. He had also the cause of his disciples, and of the congregations they were to form, to plead, and no doubt he also delighted in communion with his Father.

Meantime the Apostles encountered a violent contrary wind; and though they had embarked in the evening, they had made not above three miles, when, about the dawn, three hours before sunrise, Jesus walked upon the lake to overtake them. At first they cried out in their alarm, supposing it to be an apparition; and he increased their terror, by seeming as if he would pass by them. They took courage, however, as soon as he spoke, and Peter, raised to the height of confidence by this second miracle, sought permission to come to him. His Master suffered him; and as long as his faith was fixed upon his power, he was enabled to walk upon the waves; but the storm soon drew off his attention to his apparent danger, his faith staggered, and he began to sink. Still in his extremity he relied upon Jesus, who stretched forth his hand in answer to his cry, and kept him up, gently rebuking him at the same time for his want of faith; not saying, why didst thou come? but, why didst thou distrust?

They embarked, and the ship instantaneously, and therefore miraculously, “self-moving^m, without aid from oars or winds,” or rather in spite of them, reached the coast, not as was intended at Bethsaida, but at Capernaum. The Apostles, amazed beyond measure, seem to have been more impressed by this than by any preceding miracle, for they worshipped him in consequence, not merely as a superior, but as the Son of God, his right to which title he had so strikingly shown, first by providing for so many *a table in the wilderness*ⁿ, and now by walking upon the waves of the sea.

65. *His Discourse concerning eating his flesh and drinking his blood, which causes many of his disciples to leave him, but elicits a confession of adherence to him from Peter.*
John vi. 22—71.

The next morning, the multitude, disappointed at his not returning, came after him in boats to Capernaum, where they expressed a natural surprise, as the wind was contrary, at his arrival before them. Instead of satisfying their curiosity, he blamed them for their motive in seeking him; which they did, not because convinced by his miracles that he was a Teacher of righteousness, but to make him a king, in order to enjoy secular advantages. He exhorted them, to labour not for the perishable food of the body, but for that food of the soul, which lasts for ever, and which the Son of man shall give; to their enquiry, what shall they work, he replied, this is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom He hath sent. Finding that faith in him was the

^m Thus expressed in the Paraphrase in hexameter verse of St. John's Gospel by Nonnus, in the fifth century.

ἐπεὶ θεοδινεῖ παλμῶ

Οἷα νόος πτερόεις, ἀνέμων δίχα, νόσφον ἐρετμῶν

Τελεπόροις λιμένεσσιν ὁμίλεν αὐτομάτη νηὺς.

ⁿ Ps. lxxviii. 19.

work that he required, and seeing that such doctrine had nothing congenial with their carnal expectations, their admiration began to die away, and suspicions to arise; and they asked what miracle he would work, to induce them to believe in him; what evidence he could show, to convince them that he could bestow upon them eternal life. Their remark, *Our fathers did eat manna* in the desert, insinuated that no comparison ought to be made of him who had fed a few thousand with ordinary food, and their Lawgiver, who in a country as unproductive had fed not once, but for forty years, the whole nation of their ancestors *with bread from heaven*. His reply, carrying on the metaphor which they had introduced, contrasted the manna of which they spoke with *the true bread from heaven, which giveth life to the world*. Lord, they exclaimed, not perceiving his intention of drawing them off from literal to spiritual feeding, from the food of the body to that of the soul, *evermore give us this bread*. He then plainly declared that he was speaking of himself, replying, *I am the Bread of life*; and went on to say, that though they deserted him, he should not be left without disciples, for all whom his Father had given to him would come, and that none who came would be rejected. None that seek salvation from him need ever fear to be cast out; for it is his Father's will, that will to accomplish which he came down from heaven, that *whoever seeth, that is, contemplateth in all his offices, the Son, and believeth in him, shall have everlasting life*. They murmured at this saying, which they could not reconcile with his apparently ordinary birth, and he replied that no one can come to him unless the Father draw him. He then showed the inferiority of the manna to the genuine living bread, which is of such a nature, that whoever feedeth on it shall live for ever; and added, that *this Bread is his flesh, which he will give for the life of the world*. At this declaration they strove among themselves, saying, *How can this man give us his flesh to eat?* Now it is remarkable, that

upon this expression of their amazement, our Lord, instead of explaining his words, aggravated the difficulty which embarrassed them, by affirming in the most solemn manner, *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.* That this declaration should appear harsh and incredible, is not surprising; for though Scripture had often spoken of *instruction* as the food of the soul, no *instructor* had yet called himself the bread of life; and the notion of feeding upon him must have been alike repulsive to their reason and their feelings. The language conveys the idea of actual feeding, and was so understood by the audience; for they said it was *a hard saying*; and we also might have taken the words literally, did not we know, from our Lord's subsequent explanation, that he was misunderstood. It is remarkable, that this meaning has not been put upon it by the fathers; and Augustine^o repeatedly expresses himself against it in the strongest terms. Thus in one work he writes, "in these words Christ seems to command an heinous crime, or a flagitious deed. The passage, therefore, is a figure, enjoining us to communicate in the passion of our Lord, and admonishing us to lay it up sweetly and usefully in our memory, because for us his flesh was crucified." "In another, the disciples^p themselves were hard, and not the saying; they received it foolishly, they thought it carnally." "Believe, and^q thou hast eaten." And once more, "Whosoever believeth in him, that person eateth^r." Our Lord, finding this declaration to be a stumbling-block to his disciples, endeavoured to remove it by adding, *Doth*

^o De Doctrina Christiana, iii. 15. 16.

^p Augustin. Enarratio in Ps. xcvi.

^q Tract. xxv. in Evang. Joan.

^r Tract. xxvi.

this cause you to stumble? What then will ye do, if ye shall see the Son of man ascend where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. The conclusion of the sentence unlocks his meaning, and it seems extraordinary that with this key to it the Roman Catholic should take literally what he spoke figuratively, especially when a careful examination of the discourse would show that he spoke of himself indifferently as bread and as flesh. He first said, *I am the bread of life*, afterwards he calls this bread *his flesh*, which he *will give for the life of the world*; and he closed the discourse with saying, *This is that bread which came down from heaven; he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.* These words seem to speak for themselves, but the reason for the introduction of his ascension does not appear so plain; but it is, I conceive, conveyed by Cranmer, in these words, “He so spake, that they should not phantasy that they should with their teeth eat him here present in earth; for his flesh so eaten, saith he, should profit them nothing. And yet so should they not eat him, for he would take his body away from them, and ascend with it into heaven; and there by faith, and not with teeth, they should spiritually eat him, sitting at the right hand of the Father^s.” A reason which had been long before thus suggested by Augustine, “they thought he would deal out his own body to them, but he told them that he was about to ascend to heaven whole and entire^t.” The commemoration of our Lord’s death had not yet been instituted, and allusion to it would have been at the time unintelligible; yet as he addressed all ages, and if he spoke in this manner by anticipation of Baptism, we may assume that he now alluded to the spiritual feeding on him of those who should hereafter in faith partake of this Sacrament. I say in faith, for, to use Augustine’s^u words

^s Defence, vol. ii. p. 3.

^t Tract. xxviii. in Evang. Joan.

^u Tract. in Evang. Joan. xxvi.

incorporated in our XXIXth Article, “ though the wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, do carnally and visibly press with their teeth the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, yet they are in no wise partakers of Christ;” and so far are such from benefitting by the act, that, as we learn from the Apostle, those who do not discern in it the Lord’s Body, *eat and drink to themselves condemnation*. Our Lord, we may confidently say, spoke only of worthy communicants: but I agree with Waterland^x, that the universality of the language forbids our limiting the eating of Christ’s body to sacramental feeding; for as it is declared to be indispensable to salvation, we must assume such a spiritual eating, as will comprehend not only all sincere Christians, who have never enjoyed the opportunity of communicating; but the holy men, who lived before Christ’s coming in the flesh, who, in the words of the Homily on Faith, “ though not named Christians, yet was it a Christian faith they had, for they looked for all benefits of God the Father, through the merits of his Son, as we do now;” and the Apostle assures us, that the Israelites in the wilderness *did all eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink*. A careful examination of the discourse will remove the difficulty, for it will show that the strong metaphors of eating *the flesh of the Son of Man*, and *the bread from heaven*, are equivalent to the simpler phrases of *coming to him*, and *believing in him*, and therefore, *whoever believeth in him, hath eternal life*. Thus he not only said, *whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life*; and, *he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever*; but also, *him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out, and he that believeth in me hath everlasting life*. This metaphor guards the doctrine from abuse, by conveying a more definite idea than coming or believing, for eating, involves the idea of the death of him who is our food; and the belief intended must not be a

^x Vol. 4. Review of the Doctrine of the Eucharist, chap. vi.

vague and general acquiescence in the truth of Christianity, but an influential faith in the efficacy of the Saviour's death as an atonement for sin, and a consequent partaking of the pardon it has obtained, and of the grace of the Holy Spirit which it has purchased. According to Waterland, who supports his view by a chain of authorities, this discourse was not *interpreted* of the Eucharist for the first four centuries, either in the Greek or the Latin Church; but as that was one mode of partaking of the benefits of the passion, it was sometimes *applied*, as it is by our Church, to explain its nature, and to promote its reception. This frequent application led in time to the literal interpretation; and in the beginning of the fifth century, it introduced the custom of giving the consecrated elements to infants. Romanists in general contend for the sacramental interpretation, yet many of their eminent divines prefer the spiritual, influenced, it may be, both by the disuse of infant communion, and the denial of the cup to the laity, neither of which can easily be vindicated, if they insist upon a strict adherence to the declaration, *except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*. The Reformers in general, both our own and the foreign, reject this sense. Our Lord, as I have remarked, may allude to the future commemoration of his death; but to suppose that he will really give us his flesh to eat and his blood to drink, is to substitute for a spiritual union, a material feeding, which, even were it possible, could but feed the body, without profiting the soul. Such is the error of the Roman Catholics, many of whom deduce from this discourse the dogma of the real corporal presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which is contrary to reason, and cannot be supported by the Scripture; and as our Lord speaks of dwelling in the believer, which has been always supposed to mean, not in person, but by his influence; so we conclude, that eating and drinking

are not to be taken literally, but, as appears from the earlier part of the conversation, as equivalent to *coming to*, and *believing in, him*. For a complete refutation of the Roman Catholic exposition, and the vindication of that of Saint Augustine, I must refer to Mr. Faber's *Christ's Discourse at Capernaum fatal to the doctrine of Transubstantiation, on the very principles of exposition adopted by the divines of the Roman Church*. In this argumentative and learned work, in which he supports his statement by a series of theological writers, from Tertullian to Elfric, a Saxon of the tenth century, he may be said to have exhausted the subject.

Many of the disciples forsook Jesus in consequence of this discourse, and he seems to have been left alone with the twelve. He asked if they also wished to depart, thus intimating that he had no desire for reluctant followers. Peter, from the warmth of his disposition and his attachment, avowed, in the name of all, in the most emphatic terms, his conviction that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God; and his reply, *to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life*, proves, that he understood his Master's spiritual interpretation of his discourse, and that he looked forward to no real feeding upon his body. Now when we consider that they were as yet ignorant both of the fundamental fact upon which the propriety of our Lord's language rests, the fact that he was to be the sacrifice to atone for sin, and likewise of the nature of the feast by a participation in which the benefits of that sacrifice were to be communicated to the faithful; it appears that nothing but faith in him, his Father's gift, could have secured their adherence. To this confession Jesus only thought fit to reply, that one of them was a devil, that is, a false accuser, who would betray him. As he did not name the traitor, the tendency of his words was to check presumptuous self-confidence, and to lead them all to pray, that they might not enter into temptation.

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